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RETALIATION AND PUNISHMENT

MR. CHURCHILL's speech at Edinburgh was attuned to a happy occasion, and he avoided any close discussion of the graver military and political problems of the hour. He dwelt, as well he might, on the proud year during which this country fought alone and drew its inspiration from his spirited leadership. A nation that fights alone must face grave perils, but it escapes some of the difficulties that beset it when it acts with allies. If Mr. Churchill had realised with what uneasiness the country watches any divergence between ourselves and the Soviet Union, he might have found something to say on that subject. It is significant that his audience cheered his generous reference to Stalingrad as it cheered nothing else in his speech. He was equally silent on India. We are glad that Edinburgh bestowed its freedom upon him, but the sentiment which chiefly needs to be conveyed to him is one of anxiety over the delay in opening a Second Front in Europe and over his handling of the Indian question.

In the graver portions of this speech Mr. Churchill had something to say about Nazi atrocities, and he gave his fellow-citizens the assurance that "no weakness will be shown." Here he touched on two matters which are much in our thoughts at this moment—the shackling of prisoners of war and the publication of an official document dealing with the punishment of Nazi criminals. By shackling the 1,370 prisoners taken at Dieppe in reprisal for the momentary binding of the wrists of the handful of men taken during the raid on Sark, Hitler has aroused in us all feelings of anger and contempt both natural and just. The scale of his action betrays this man's delight in cruelty. But we share the disapproval of the Government's measures of retaliation which Professor Gilbert Murray and Mr. Bernard Shaw have expressed in the columns of the *Times*. The War Office has managed this business clumsily. The distinction it draws between binding a man's hands in the hurry of battle and shackling him when he is a helpless prisoner behind barbed wire is reasonable, but it seems inconsistent to express disapproval of the order issued by a subordinate officer at Dieppe and yet to defend what was afterwards done at Sark. This is, however, a small matter: it is the shackling of our German prisoners in Canada that raises a question of principle. Most of these men fought bravely, and it was always our tradition, long before any legal Convention existed, to treat prisoners of war with humanity and respect. By imitating Hitler's brutality, we are descending to his level. So far from showing strength by doing violence to our own instincts, it seems to us that the military authorities are behaving weakly. The strong course is to adhere with steadfast pride to our own rules of civilised conduct. Once this competition begins, where shall we draw the line? If Hitler were to flog prisoners or to decimate them, or again, if he were to shoot British hostages, few of us would propose to do likewise. In this rivalry let us refuse to enter the lists. The proper course is to trust to the good offices of the protecting Power.

The punishment after the armistice of Nazi leaders and commanders guilty of barbarous conduct in occupied territory raises a much more difficult and complex issue. Nothing of a comparable horror has happened on our earth since the dark centuries that followed the fall of the Roman Empire. But the barbarians possessed neither machine-guns nor gas-chambers, and they lacked the efficient organisation of Himmler's Black Guards. For some of their wholesale cruelties the Nazis profess motives based on perverted considerations of policy. They exterminate Czech and Polish intellectuals in order to ease their own task of dominating and exploiting these subject peoples. They can allege reasons, however false, for regarding Jews as an alien and unassimilable element in the population. But when it comes to such a deed as the slaughter at Kiev, which Mr. Churchill mentioned, of 54,000 persons, we have passed beyond the frontiers of policy and rational conduct. Orgies on this scale can only mean that the Nazis revel in the enjoyment of their blood-lust and in the exercise of power for the sake of a perverted sensual satisfaction. There is no understanding what Hitler and his intimates have done, first in Germany and then abroad, save on the assumption that their defiance of the Western code of morality springs from a profound psychological abnormality. Human nature is more delicately poised on the edge of sanity than most of us like to think. A few paranoiacs who can contrive to seize power may by skilful propaganda and the prestige that follows success evoke in a numerous section of their subjects lusts and passions which it is the business of civilisation to repress or to sublimate into something serviceable.

It is this consideration, with some others, that leads us to approach this question of punishment with caution. Civilised society has ceased to punish in the old sense of the word, which meant requital and retribution. It may seek to deter. It will place dangerously abnormal persons where they can do no harm. But increasingly it tries to find a treatment that will have a curative and remedial effect. This slow change in our views of punishment is one of the most salutary advances that civilisation has made in the past century. But there is always a risk, when our passions are roused, that we may slip back into an attitude which forgets all that science and experience have taught us. The problem of dealing with the Germans both during and after the war calls for all the wisdom and all the science we can muster, for sober psychology as well as sound economics. When, the other evening, the B.B.C. allowed one of its comedians to recite some dreary verses about "hanging Mr. Hitler," the peril in front of us was obvious. The more we dwell on this prospect of satisfying our hatred the less likely are we, or our statesmen, to face the problem of practical psychology in a scientific spirit. It is the barbarian in us who enjoys the thought of hanging. There are other good reasons that make for self-restraint. In the first place victory lies far ahead. By anticipating it too lightly we are the less likely to take all the steps and deploy all the energy for which this sombre hour imperatively calls. In the second place, the more loudly we talk of punishment, the more surely will the Germans steel themselves to prolong a war of defence.

The first query we would raise about the plan which now finds favour turns on the decision that the Germans shall at the armistice hand over the criminals to be tried and punished by Allied tribunals. What sort of criminals? Last time old Hindenburg headed the list. He may have been technically responsible for some things that ought not to have been done, yet most Germans looked up to him with gratitude, while our own soldiers regarded him with respect. To talk of punishing him was a repulsive folly. This time there will be other German generals in his case, men whose record may not be impeccably clean, since they obeyed evil orders, though on the whole they may have behaved well according to their lights. Are they to be handed over? If so, their armies will not capitulate till they are ground to powder. Nor is it likely that Germans will ever accept as unbiased the verdict of Allied courts. Perhaps the weakest point in our case is that no one talked of "hanging Mr. Hitler" while he was perfecting his technique of torture on the bodies of German Socialists and German Jews; on the contrary, some who now call for penalties were then his admirers. We propose to punish only when the victims are our own allies. Now as we see the facts the men who are the chief offenders against humanity are those who degraded Germany before they oppressed Europe. The best hope we can cherish is that a German revolution will deal with the heads of the Nazi party and the Gestapo and relieve the Allies of this unwelcome responsibility. There will be no clear moral gain for the future until the Germans themselves revolt against these men and themselves condemn the perverted reasoning and the detestable lusts that inspired them. This is so clear and so important that it ought to dictate all our tactics in handling the Germans. If we speak of the criminals at all, the first step is to give a dispassionate and documented account of what they have done, and then to say that we rely on all that is still sane in the German nation to deal with them when it can—which is not yet. But by far the more important task that lies before us is to convince this saner section of our enemies that it may reckon, after the Nazi Bedlam has collapsed, on the enjoyment in the Europe we envisage of a share compatible both with self-respect and prosperity. But if, after all, there is no German revolution, what then? In that case the proper object to pursue is to ensure that the men who have proved themselves a curse as much to Germany as to Europe shall not infect them by their presence. The responsible criminals are the known heads of the Nazi party and the Gestapo. Our purpose would be secured by banishing them to St. Helena. But already we may have said more than it is wise to say. Let us win victory before we nibble at its fruits.

Peccavimus

Mr. Allah Baksh, the Premier of Sind, of course a Muslim, who renounced his titles as Bahadur Khan by way of protest against the tone of Mr. Churchill's recent statement on India, has been dismissed from his office. Few Englishmen would retain their posts in this country if approval of that statement were required as a test of loyalty. What the local consequences may be, we do not know. Three of the late premier's colleagues have resigned, and it remains to be seen whether an alternative Ministry can be formed which will command a majority in the provincial legislature. Far more serious, however, than the local consequences are the general conclusions which will now be drawn about our readiness to tolerate independence of mind among provincial ministers. The formula used in this case was staggering: Mr. Baksh was dismissed because he had lost the confidence of the Governor. But what if he retained, as is probable, the confidence of the electors and their representatives? By this unhappy performance we tempt Indians to conclude that ministers in the provinces must be our puppets. That would, doubtless, be an excessive inference, but we have assuredly lowered the prestige of these ministers at a time when we ought to have fostered it.

Equality

The ending of extraterritoriality in China and the reception of Ethiopia among the United Nations were announced on October 9th by the United States and Great Britain. They are both events in political history, and since it is impossible to separate politics from the war they have military meaning also. "Extrality," as China Old Hands call it, is a long story. It is true that at the beginning of their ninety-nine years' lease the extraterritorial treaties were the work of the Chinese as much as of the British; the government of China was determined to confine foreigners to limited areas in a few ports, and their trade to limited Chinese intermediaries; Europeans were determined to live under their own laws in China. But the root of the matter always was that China was forced to trade by the British Fleet; she accepted extraterritoriality as the forfeit of defeat, Britain as the gain of victory, and the unequal treaties were felt as a humiliation by the one side, as the opium wars were an unacknowledged shame to the other. The treaties have long been a hindrance to trade, since they furnished the occasion for anti-foreign movements and boycott. Their contribution to order even in the foreign concessions was not always apparent. There have been cases when crime by a foreign consul could only be tried by himself; and some settlements, such as the Portuguese colony of Macao and the Japanese concessions everywhere in China, have been used systematically to shelter and protect drug traffic on a fantastic scale. The British offer to revise the treaties was one of Austen Chamberlain's more respectable actions when Foreign Secretary; if the States enjoying extraterritorial rights had not chosen to wait on each other like a crowd jamming in a door, the treaties would have disappeared years ago. As it was, we handed back some concessions, virtually under *force majeure*, in 1927; in 1928 the old tariff restrictions were voluntarily abandoned, and the rendition of other settlements was prevented by the Japanese invasion, after which it became advantageous to China to keep some of them in being. They are all now in Japanese hands, a nemesis on those Shanghai merchants who supported the Manchurian aggression with such energy, so that the formal denunciation of the treaties might seem to be purely symbolic. Symbols, however, have great psychological importance. China regarded the treaties as the sign of a "semi-colonial status," and their ending means her admission to equality among the nations. Incidentally it is welcome as an example of concerted policy between the United States and ourselves. The admission of Ethiopia as an ally is a belated act of justice to a nation which has well earned that dangerous honour. The Emperor has desired it ever since the Italians were defeated; in the ungraceful manner of diplomacy we delayed till he telegraphed to President Roosevelt, who could do no less than welcome his offer.

Mr. Kendall and his Critics

Mr. Kendall had distinctly the best of his exchanges with Col. Walter Elliot during the debate arising out of the report of the Public Accounts Committee. It is true that the methods of price-fixing adopted in the negotiations between the Government and Mr. Kendall's firm seem to have been extraordinarily lax; but the fact, now made clear, that the prices fixed were provisional and were subject to adjustment in the light of ascertained costs takes all the sting out of the charges previously levelled at the firm. We are not defending the very curious methods which seem to have been followed; but, in the light of the debate, much more blame seems to rest on the departments than on Mr. Kendall and his associates. The charge of refusing necessary costing information, which also loomed large in the Committee's Report, Mr. Kendall simply denied outright; and it does not appear to have been proved. We have no inside knowledge of the matter, and are going entirely by what was said in the Report, and subsequently in the debate. On that evidence, the most reasonable conclusion seems to be that the entire business of fixing contract prices was in a hopeless muddle at the time when the incidents occurred; for it is barely possible to suppose that there can have been a legitimate margin of doubt about ultimate costs as large as the figures imply. Wide margins are unavoidable when firms are changing over to new and untested products; but these margins were astronomical. Col. Llewellin came gallantly to Mr. Kendall's rescue in the debate; it might have been more to the point if someone had come to the rescue of the Minister of Aircraft Production.

An Unjustifiable Strike

The Tyneside shipyard strike is the sort of strike that ought not to occur under war conditions, unless there is something behind it that has not yet come out. The apparent cause—a change in pay-day and a deferment of wages for several days—might have been serious if provision had not been made for advancing the money so as to enable the men to carry on. As provision was made, it is difficult to imagine what can have induced a considerable body of shop stewards to lead the strike, and a considerable number of men to respond, in face of the disapproval of their Unions. Is the explanation "sheer nerves"—a condition of nervous exhaustion inducing the men to make mountains out of molehills? Or what is it? Labour relations in the shipyards are not particularly good, and the wear and tear of labour in the yards during the past year must have been considerable. That is the charitable explanation, unless there is more behind the affair than appears. If it is the correct explanation, it suggests the need for a careful study of shipyard conditions in order to make sure that everything possible is being done to reduce overstrain and to enlist the support of the workers through Joint Production Committees. Such a strike, one feels, could hardly have occurred, or at all events have lasted for more than a few hours, unless there had been something radically amiss.

Religious Education

The controversy over religious education is now bubbling up. The President of the Board is reputed to have said, soon after he took office, that he proposed to get this issue quickly out of the way, and so get on to the main job of educational reorganisation. He has still, by all the evidence, some way to go. The Catholic opposition has hardly begun to show its hand, though it made a small, unsuccessful reconnaissance at the Trades Union Congress. The Nonconformists have just begun to show their teeth against any proposal to give denominational Church schools a fresh lease of life at the taxpayers' expense. The real crux of the problem, as we see it, is not in the primary schools catering for children up to 11+, but in the reorganised senior schools and in the general provision to be made in the name of "secondary education for all." Are the denominations, merely because senior schools are at present under the elementary code (they ought clearly to be transferred to the secondary code almost at once), to be allowed to get a firm foothold in the new structure of secondary education? We earnestly hope they are not. We have every sympathy with the view that, where religion is taught in schools, it should be taught only by teachers who believe in it, and not by conscripts who may be atheists or anything they please. But if this principle is to be accepted, it will be necessary to have very good safeguards against the refusal of promotion to teachers merely because they are not willing to undertake religious education. On a quite different point, it would be intolerable if tenderness for denominational interests were allowed to authorise the survival of schools manifestly obsolete and unsuitable for the conduct of teaching according to modern ideas. The "non-provided" schools ought to go, on this ground alone: nor should it be forgotten, when the claims of religious freedom are invoked in their defence, that in thousands of villages the effect of retaining them is to compel parents who are not in sympathy with the Church of England to send their children to Church schools.

ALLIED WAR STRATEGY

Let no one suppose that it is an easy matter to co-ordinate the strategy of four widely separated sovereign States of equal status. The problem which now confronts the United Nations is infinitely more complicated and difficult than that which faced the Allies during the last war, and for which no solution was found until the appointment of Marshal Foch as Generalissimo in the spring of 1918.

Once again the Germans have the inestimable advantage of operating on interior lines under the supreme direction of a High Command of which there is a single chief.

To an even greater extent than Ludendorff, Hitler bears final and absolute responsibility for the conduct of the war, and can give orders which are instantly executed over the whole field of action. From his headquarters he controls the production of Europe, directs strategy, allocates both raw materials and man-power, and—last but not least—issues instructions to his so-called "allies." The result is a plan.

No corresponding plan is yet apparent amongst his opponents. They have at their disposal far greater productive capacity and an incomparably larger potential of man-power. But they have not once succeeded in concentrating superior forces at a vital point. For three years Hitler has succeeded in retaining the initiative, and in imposing his will upon his enemies. He started with all the cards in his hands. Possessed of the mightiest military machine in the world, he could attack whom he liked, where he liked, when he liked. The Allies entered the war reluctantly, unprepared, and piecemeal. But it is now time they took a trick. They cannot hope to take a trick unless they are agreed about which trick to take, which cards to play, and who is to play them. Can it honestly be maintained that there are any signs of such agreement?

To the unfeigned delight of Goebbels the Russians continue to conduct a hurricane campaign for the opening of a second front. If there were agreement about a second front this would be unnecessary. Air-Marshal Harris broadcasts to the world that he can win the war by bombing Germany. The Russians reply that Stalingrad has suffered bombing equivalent to the total action of 9,000 bombers, and still holds. "It is time to forget stale theories," says the *Red Star*. "Victory against the common foe can be achieved only by forceful blows by all the armed forces—ground, air and sea."

Meanwhile, in the United States, discussion rages in the public press about the objects of Allied strategy and the means of obtaining them. Are they to concentrate on building up the finest and best-equipped mechanised army in the world? That will take time. It will also mean a reduction of lease-lending, and they are already behindhand on the schedules promised to Russia. Have Roosevelt and Churchill quarrelled? What does Wendell Willkie mean by "prodding"? Are the British playing a selfish game? And so on. In the circumstances the comment of Dorothy Thompson that the four major Allied Powers are still waging for the most part four separate wars is fully justified.

"Politics," said Bismarck, "are not—as the professors imagine—a science; they are an art based on what is possible." Within the limits of the possible, what can be done to bring about a more effective co-ordination of Allied strategy and, by inference, production? It must be accepted that not one of the four major Allied Powers is yet prepared to part with its ultimate sovereign rights. In the final analysis Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin and Chiang Kai-shek are responsible to the peoples they govern for whatever policy may be pursued, and they cannot be divested of that responsibility. Every important decision on an issue affecting the welfare and security of the States of which they are the political heads must be sanctioned by them on behalf of the Governments over which they preside. It is in many ways unfortunate that they cannot sit in council together. Geography alone precludes it; and they must do the best they can with the means of communication at their disposal. But is it beyond our capacity to provide them with machinery which will enable their chosen representatives to sit, and think, and act in concert, and by so doing to develop a co-ordinated and coherent Allied strategy which could be submitted to them continuously for approval? I have in mind the formation of an Allied Great General Staff. The Supreme Council at Versailles failed because its members were not invested with executive powers. They were a purely advisory body, and their advice was seldom listened to. If it is to be effective, a Great General Staff would have to comprise the Chiefs-of-Staff in each of the Allied nations, or their deputies; and also commanders of the calibre of MacArthur, Wavell and Timoshenko.

An essential corollary to the formation of a Great General Staff would be the establishment of a political Executive Council of the United Nations, on the lines suggested by the Chinese Foreign Secretary, Dr. T. V. Soong. Such a council, says Dr. Soong, would help to evolve a workable world order now; and would be an international instrument fully capable of dispensing justice and enforcing law among the nations during, as well as after, the war.

Here, surely, are two proposals which are worthy of serious consideration. To those who maintain that they are too ambitious it must be pointed out that, if we want to win this war before the entire world is reduced to an ashpit, we cannot go on indefinitely as we are now doing. In the field of strategy, as of production, the allies are suffering from a multiplicity of unco-ordinated committees with inadequate powers. And the results, too frequently, are chaotic.

In order to produce a plan, and then translate it into effective action, the number of instruments of Government must be reduced; and those that are retained must be armed with sufficient authority to carry out the policy which is decided upon.

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POLITICAL AWAKENING

No one who, like Satan, goes up and down in the earth and walks about on it with his eyes and ears open can view the political landscape in this country in the fourth year of war without uneasiness. It is true that the immediate prospect looks at the moment brighter than it did, and some of the most threatening clouds have rolled away. Despite the disastrous results of its handling of India, the Churchill Government is in a stronger position to-day than it was a month or two ago; in wars, which we eventually win, we are so accustomed to military defeats and disasters that we tend to regard even a temporary absence of them as almost equivalent to a victory, and give the credit of things being not quite so bad as they were to the Government. The House of Commons two weeks ago, by a large majority voted to prolong its own existence for another twelve months, and Mr. Robert Boothby in these columns last week gave his reasons for thinking that the decision was a wise one. It is therefore inviting, particularly for the party politician, to assume that "politics" have been settled for some time ahead, that we need not think about them, and that we can get on with winning the war.

We think this complacent attitude mistaken and dangerous, and we propose to throw a few unpleasant pebbles in order to disturb the placid surface of the pond. The most disquieting feature in the political landscape is the disharmony between political public opinion and the political parties, the House of Commons, and the Government itself. General statements about public opinion are usually false or tendencious or both, but there are certain facts with regard to it at the moment which are indisputable. During the last year there has been a strong current of political thinking in all classes; there is a new desire for social experiment and progress, for a new order in Britain and Europe. The current is vague, vacillating and undirected, for the most important function of a democracy, to create a politically educated electorate, has been persistently and deliberately neglected in this country. The British have the soundest political instinct of any European people, and this has again and again saved them from disasters, but the Englishman—if not the Scotsman and Welshman—for centuries has kept his mind empty of political ideas, a habit which often has its uses, particularly for the governing classes, but which every now and again becomes a menace.

Two things have forced us to overcome our traditional reluctance to think, the war and the remarkable achievements of the Russian people, its Socialist Government, and a social system which has abolished private property. This thought is producing a political awakening. No one who goes about the country in contact with different classes can doubt that this is so. Everywhere there is a new eagerness to discuss, to learn, and to question the old assumptions about politics and society. One sees it if one talks to a person sitting next to one in a railway carriage, if one lectures for Abca to the army, or if one discusses the war with an engine driver or with the oldest and most conservative bourgeois inhabitant of Cheltenham or Eastbourne. So marked is this awakening that the other day in a country town, so "backward" politically before the war that it was considered useless to attempt a Left Wing meeting, 800 or 900 people packed a hall on a Saturday evening to listen to a socialist expounding socialism.

There is no doubt of the existence of this awakening. It can be described roughly as a movement to the Left, affecting the politically conscious both on the Left and the Right and that large, amorphous mass of opinion which is not normally politically conscious or tied securely to any political party. It is, as we have said, vague, uninstructed, and undirected, and that is why it is at the same time a serious danger and a great opportunity. It is dangerous because, at a critical moment in our history, it is creating disharmony between the mass of political opinion and the working of our political institutions. The danger is actually increased because an overwhelming majority of the people support Mr. Churchill and the Government of which he is head. For they support him and it as the instruments for carrying on the war, and this conceals the disharmony between public opinion and the Government, the House of Commons and the parties. Let us return for a moment, as an example, to the question of the House of Commons. There is this vague but profound dissatisfaction with the old ways of the old society, this willingness for experiment in a new and juster order. It is faced by a House elected in and tainted by the Baldwin-Chamberlain era. The House itself is dominated by a coalition Government, in which an all-powerful Conservative Party represents the old order and the status quo and the Labour Party should stand for progress and change. In all coalitions the party of the status quo holds the whip hand. Now the reasons given by Mr. Boothby last week for leaving the House and things generally as they are for another year may be convincing. The fact remains that the ordinary man views the existing House with suspicion and impatience as the ossified remains of an old and bad order. There is great danger to democracy in such a situation, particularly if the demand for change grows. The future of democracy depends absolutely upon preserving and invigorating confidence of the people in the eagerness of their representatives and the efficiency of their institutions to plan and create a better world. That is why it is imperative that the House of Commons should devise means in the near future for renewing itself and the confidence of the people in it as an instrument of efficiency and progress.

There is another and an even more important point. Those who, like ourselves, stand on what is called the Left, and have for many years insisted upon the necessity for great social and economic changes, cannot but view with dismay the way in which the Labour Party, which should be the party of progress, leaves this growing movement of political awakening without any encouragement or any direction. Theoretically the Party has a programme of peaceful revolution, of democratic socialism, of a society in which economic and educational equality is combined with individual liberty. It is precisely with the meaning and practical implications of such a programme that this vast mass of new and uneducated, but uneasy, politicians up and down the country have become concerned. Never before has there been such an opportunity to educate public opinion in the support of educational reform and socialist evolution, long overdue. But the Labour Party and its leaders are giving no lead of any sort or kind in the country; their apathy, and often their activity when there is any, discourage their existing and drive away potential supporters. We do not deny their difficulties. Most of the leaders have no time to spare from the work of their Ministries and, as we said above, the Party, being on the Left, is at a serious disadvantage in a coalition. But that makes it all the more imperative that the Labour Ministers should insist upon getting a fair deal in Government policy, and that the Executive Committee should carry on an active, non-stop campaign in the country for a bold policy of progress both during and after the war. If that is done, they will get an astonishing amount of support from ordinary men and women in all classes. If it is not, it will be disastrous not only for the Party, but for the nation. All political parties tend, as they grow older, to fall under the domination of their own machine, the permanent bureaucracy, and the disease affects labour and socialist parties even more malignantly than liberal and conservative. The symptoms of this kind of political sclerosis are clear in the Labour Party; it is becoming itself a party of the status quo, impotent of action, intolerant of new ideas, and unable to readjust itself to new conditions. If this continues it has no future except as a museum piece, a collection of political mummies exhibited or controlled by the museum keepers, who, from years of experience, know exactly what every "member of the Labour Party" may say or not say, do or not do. This sterilisation of the Party, if it is consummated after the war, would be a national disaster. If the measures of revolutionary economic and social reconstruction, which will be necessary after the war, are to be accomplished democratically and peacefully, a strong and active party of the Left is essential. In the political landscape of to-day—and to-morrow—the Labour Party is the only such party which is a practical alternative to the Conservative and capitalist party of the status quo. If the Labour Party fails to rejuvenate itself and to put itself at the head of the political awakening, power will again fall into the hands of the Conservatives, who will reconstruct the old order with a few new names pasted over it. The forces which the Labour Party should be mobilising now will then drift, some of them into small freak parties in which liberalism and socialism are precariously cemented by uplift, some of them into the Communist Party, and the great majority into disillusionment. And if that happens, history will repeat itself.

GIVE IT UP
if it's waste paper!

THE RESTORATION OF CAPITALISM

A PROPOSAL for a world settlement, after an Anglo-American victory, has been made by a "Committee of Editors" sponsored by the Time-Life-Fortune group of periodicals, owned by Mr. Henry Luce. A closely argued report is signed by Mr. Raymond Buell.[*]

These are not, needless to say, the views of the present American Government, nor of some abstraction which can be called "America" (there are as many different "Americas" as there are "Britains"). They are the views of a particular group, which may, it would probably be fair to say, be taken to represent the younger generation of big business.

The proposals are briefly as follows. Britain and America are to achieve and to maintain a world-wide military hegemony by means of predominant armaments. They are then to form a Customs Union, demolishing all tariff barriers between themselves, and binding themselves neither to erect new ones nor to resort to other methods of controlling imports between them. Migration between them is also to be unrestricted. They are to adhere to a currency agreement re-establishing the gold standard. (They will agree, that is to say, not to restrict or control the transfer of gold between themselves, and to maintain the convertibility of their money into gold at a fixed rate.) In a word the U.S. and the U.K. are to become a unified market. (These agreements are to be open for subsequent adherence by the British Dominions and other States.) There is, however, to be no form of political unification—no attempt to construct any kind of Federal structure as between the U.S. and the U.K. The objective of this military, political and economic settlement is clearly stated. It is "to give confidence in the future on the part of investors and entrepreneurs."

This is, needless to say, a proposal for the restoration of an unmodified capitalism. Under the capitalist system of productive and social relations, economic activity is predominantly undertaken by private individuals and groups, as and when they expect that such activity will yield them a profit, and not otherwise. The function of government, in such a system, is to provide and to maintain political and social conditions in which economic activity will appear profitable to investors and entrepreneurs.

In a major war this system, as an economic mechanism, by means of which the life of society is carried on, is necessarily suspended. For then the belligerent governments become the initiators of economic activity, issuing the orders and laying out the money, while the private firms, companies, corporations, etc., become (predominantly) mere contractors and sub-contractors carrying out orders placed with them by the Government. On the other hand the power over the Government of the men who own and control these firms, companies and corporations, is not necessarily even diminished in wartime. Therefore it is natural that they should put forward proposals for the restoration of their system to full working order at the end of the war.

As the Time-Life-Fortune report remarks, Socialists will be opposed to these proposals. They will oppose them for two principal reasons. Their first objection will be incidental to this particular proposal. Their second, and much more profound, objection will be to any such proposal.

The first and most obvious objection to this particular proposal for the restoration of capitalism is that it violates the principle that areas of political sovereignty should coincide with areas of economic systems.

It may be that this principle will emerge from the upheavals of our times in the same way as the analogous principle of *cujus regio ejus religio* emerged from the period of the wars of religion. It will be remembered that as and when, during the seventeenth century, the struggles, conducted under religious banners, which had racked Europe for more than 100 years, began to exhaust themselves, the principle of settlement which in practice emerged from the welter was that a man must adhere to the form of religion as by law established in his particular area. On the other hand neither Catholic nor Protestant States must go crusading off in the endeavour to impose their own version of Christianity upon each other. It was decided, that is to say, that there must be religious uniformity and *intolerance* within States, but religious variety and tolerance between States.

Similarly, in our times, it may well prove imperative to establish the principle that States, while necessarily imposing one particular economic system throughout their own territories, shall not seek to coerce other States to adopt their systems. We may have to recognise a principle of *cujus regio ejus economia*. There may have to be economic uniformity and intolerance within States, but economic variety and tolerance between States. The Time-Life-Fortune proposals violate this principle. For they are, in effect, a demand that the U.K. should re-establish and maintain in perpetuity the economic system which (it is assumed) will exist in the U.S.

It is a commonplace that both the possibility of victory to-day and the hope of a tolerable world for to-morrow depend upon the maintenance of Anglo-American co-operation. Precisely for this reason it is imperative that both American and British commentators upon public affairs should discuss each other's proposals with the utmost frankness. It is one of the advantages of a democracy that extremely interesting proposals such as these can be put forward by groups of private individuals in one country and can then be discussed by private individuals and groups in the other country. We should not for a moment doubt that, if we explain the effect which these proposals would have upon both the British and the American peoples, we shall fail to find strong popular forces in America which will agree with us.

Control over the *import* of goods and the *export* of money are two of the powers essential to a contemporary Government which wishes to choose for itself its own form of economy. But these are just the powers which the treaty between Britain and America proposed in the report forbids to the contracting Governments. For instance, under its terms the British Government would be impotent to attempt the regulation of the economic life of the country. It would be impotent, that is to say, to attempt such measures as the combating of unemployment, the maintenance of agricultural production at a given level, or the preservation of industries considered necessary for defence. Let us suppose that mass unemployment was developing in this country. Under the proposed treaty it would be impossible for the British Government to combat it by any kind of expansionist, "Lend-Spend," "New Dealish" measures. Such a programme (especially if it were undertaken by a progressive Government) would affect the confidence of British entrepreneurs and investors: there would be a flight of capital, followed by a gold drain, to the U.S. Such action on the part of the holders of liquid capital can be effectively, and fairly easily, countered by a Government which can impose the measures of exchange control at the moment employed, for example, by the British Government. But under the proposed treaty this would be forbidden. Therefore the Government would certainly fall. The sole method open to it of remedying the situation would be the time-honoured one of attempting to make production more profitable in the U.K. relatively to the U.S. In order to do so it could only, in one way or another, reduce wages.

In the same way no positive measures for maintaining in existence particular types of production, such as agriculture or defence industries, which might be considered desirable on non-economic grounds, could be taken by the British Government. The treaty would ensure that the level of roduction in each industry in each country ould be settled by the blind force of competition n the market. If "economic law" (i.e. the "natural" division of labour) decreed it we hould have to become, for instance, a nation xclusively engaged in producing luxuries for the ooled Anglo-American market, and receiving our asic raw material and foodstuffs from America n return. Under the terms of the proposed reaty we could do nothing effective to prevent uch a development.

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[*] The United States in a New World. I. Relations with Britain.

It is clear that in such a situation little real ndependence or sovereignty would remain to the ritish Government. We should have much less ontrol over our future than would be the case nder any scheme of "Federal Union" with merica or, for that matter, than if we became he 49th State of the Union. In both these cases e should acquire representation in the sovereign ody (the Federal Parliament in the one case, the merican Congress in the other), which would ave the real control of our destinies. The Time-ife-Fortune proposals would, whether its authors ealise it or not, place this country into dependence pon the U.S. Government and Congress without iving us any method of making our voice heard n Washington. By an ironic historical parallel it ould be, not merely "taxation without repre-entation," but "control without representation." his effect of the proposals might not necessarily ender them unattractive, however, to influential ersons in this country. If some of the owners of he national resources become alarmed about the ossibility of Socialism in Britain they may come o feel that an arrangement which put the real ontrol of the economic life of the country outside he reach of the British electorate would be very dvantageous. We may yet find that it is precisely he Labour and Socialist forces in this country ho are both determined to preserve the freedom f their country and know how it can be done.

All this is not to say that Socialists are in rinciple against genuine amalgamations between tates. Other things being equal, they will be in avour of them. Large multi-national States ppear to be a necessary transition stage upon the oad to a world community. For my part, for xample, I believe very strongly in the future of he popular forces in America. Therefore I hould, in principle, be in favour of a well-hought-out scheme for the amalgamation of the ritish and American States—by means of a ederal Union or some such similar proposal. ut this is a totally different proposition. The ime-Life-Fortune scheme, precisely because it ontains no proposals for the merging of the olitical institutions of the two countries, could esult in nothing else but the subjection of the ritish people to the rule of American Capitalism.

Moreover these proposals, it could be argued, ight well have a similar effect on the American eople themselves, though no doubt to a lesser egree. It would probably be found that uture American Governments of the "New ealish" type were effectively hamstrung by a igid treaty which had been negotiated between he two States. Such a treaty would be very ifficult in practice for either party to revise, and o long as it was unrevised it would freeze nmodified capitalist mode of production, not nly on to the smaller, but also on to the larger, arty to it.

The most important thing of all, however—he thing which is in the long run even more mportant than that Britain and America should ork together—is what they should work *for*. If hey work for the restoration of international apitalism, differing from that which has existed itherto mainly in that it would be based upon merican, instead of British, world-hegemony, hey will fail, and will deserve to fail. For the verriding objection to such a scheme is not the elationship of dependence into which it would lace this country. The overriding objection onsists in the combined improbability and ndesirability of restoring world-wide capitalism t all.

J. S.

(*To be continued.*)

A LONDON DIARY

I AM told that the Beveridge Report (which is now in the hands of the War Cabinet) is a great state-paper, audacious and far-reaching in its proposals, brilliantly written, and giving the reality of concreteness to that freedom from want and fear which is the test of a democratic society. Sir William, it is said, envisages a social services Budget which, with family allowances, will amount to some seven hundred millions a year. It will be interesting to see the attitude of the Government to the first really bold planning for the post-war world that has been submitted to it. If it deals with the Report swiftly, courageously, and imaginatively, it may mark an epoch in the history of Western democracy. This is going to be one of the three great tests of Mr. Churchill's Premiership outside the direct strategy of the war. The others are India and the preparation of government machinery adequate to the tasks of reconstruction.

* * *

The Indian debate was a cheerless affair with Mr. Amery repeating with wooden stolidity the ineffective half-truths beyond which it has become impossible for him to see; except that I thought Mr. Attlee's speech hinted a more eager desire for a way out of the impasse which the Government itself has helped to create, the ability to take the initiative in this vital realm seems dead in Downing Street. The dismissal by the Governor of Sind of his Prime Minister for returning his decorations to the British Government and saying frankly that he doubts whether Mr. Churchill and Mr. Amery believe in freedom for India was, I thought, a monstrous piece of foolishness. It is far too near the treatment of M. Herriot by Vichy to be wise. Those who listened on Saturday last to the broadcast from America by the distinguished journalist, Mr. E. K. Lindley (who is very close to the White House) will have realised from his remarks that we do not add to our prestige in world-opinion by throwing away what few Indian assets we have.

* * *

A friend has sent me from Washington some interesting samples of the private news-letters which are sent out by different agencies to their subscribers, mostly the business community. They reveal much the same outlook as Mr. Kenneth de Courcy and the Imperial Policy Group in this country. There is the same fear of any positive action by government, the same tenderness for Franco-Spain, the same clear dislike of the Soviet Union, and the same inclination to take it for granted that democracy means *laissez-faire*. Many of these news-letters do in a sophisticated way what the egregious Dies Committee did with clumsy ignorance. The purpose in both cases is the same—to provide pressure-groups with the information to enable them to be forehanded in their propaganda against any legislative proposals which even look like a mild brand of liberalism. American business is determined to win the war; but it is also determined to make the world safe for business men.

* * *

It is good to see that neither Mr. Burrows, the President of the N.U.R., nor Mr. Fred Smith, the secretary of the A.E.U., is prepared silently to accept the T.U.C. General Council's decision not to inquire into trade union structure. No doubt the problems to which such an inquiry would give rise are both complex and delicate. But there is no serious doubt that the present structure is in many ways out of date, that it leads to overlapping, multiplication of officials, and an undesirable "poaching" by unions on one another's preserves. Mr. Smith, at any rate, does not mince his words; the Council's decision, he says, "is a display of moral cowardice not consistent with the General Council's claim to exercise authority and leadership in matters of common concern to unions." It would be a tragedy indeed if the General Council did not take steps now to prepare for the big problems its members will face when peace comes. Are vested interests here, also, too powerful to submit to examination in the common interest?

* * *

The attempt of some members of Parliament to undo Mr. Morrison's proposals to amalgamate some of the smaller police forces reads like a carry-over from the world of Dickens; though just as Mr. Nupkins can still be found on not a few local benches, so there are doubtless people who prefer a police force which they can themselves control even if its area and size mean that it is incapable of efficiency. I hope Mr. Morrison will not hesitate to go on swiftly with his proposals. If he will add to them the creation of ways and means of more adequate training for all ranks in the art of administration, he will make his tenure of office a memorable one. This does not mean reviving Hendon on a larger scale. That ought to be reserved for training in the purely technical aspects of police work. The more the police, in their general functions, are trained in a normal atmosphere of education, the better, afterwards, will be their relations with the public. I wish, too, that Mr. Morrison would turn his mind to the training of prison officers. There is immense scope here for a Home Secretary with his energy and determination.

* * *

Shortly before the United States entered the war, Mr. Martin Ries, the Congressman from Texas who specialises in witch-hunting the Left, sent a list to the Department of Justice of 1,121 civil servants whom he suspected of subversive ideas; they ranged from humble stenographers to officials acting directly under the orders of the President. The Department of Justice has worked on the list for a year, with the assistance of Mr. J. Edgar Hoover who is himself no devotee of the "Reds." The result is a report to Congress from Mr. Biddle, the Attorney-General, which finds ground for the suspicions in two cases out of the 1,121; six other officials resigned of their own accord. I wonder what would be the result if the reports of M.I.5 in this country were subjected to a similar scrutiny.

* * *

I have just read the new volume of Mr. Churchill's speeches. One may disagree, as I certainly do, with his fundamental political philosophy—in essence Mr. Churchill is a Tory romantic whose liberalism derives less from a sense of justice than from the aristocratic virtue of compassion—and yet admit his consummate mastery of the orator's art. I notice with interest that he has two styles, a rotund style which seems to be compounded of Gibbon and Macaulay, ornate, like a complicated piece of tapestry, and a simple style in which I suspect he has been much influenced by the classical orations of John Bright. It is significant that the simple style is reserved for the supreme occasion, and that it is almost wholly in speeches of this kind that the phrases occur which are on everyone's lips. I note also how fully Mr. Churchill, like Bright, has the orator's sense of the emotional value provided by the sudden transition from the homely and the familiar to the dramatic and flashing climax; the speech to the American Congress is a striking example of this. Equally arresting is the fact that his whole approach to oratory is pictorial rather than analytical. He thinks in pictures which he then proceeds to paint for his audience. Does this not mean the man of action who has even a certain impatience with ideas? Mr. Churchill seems to see things, and it is the visual contact which starts him thinking.

* * *

A colleague has given me a copy of one of the most delightful anthologies that has ever come my way—Mr. Pearsall Smith's *Treasury of English Aphorisms* (Constable). It is full of grand things, and Mr. Pearsall Smith's introduction to the collection is a small masterpiece. The temptation it arouses is just to go on quoting. But I restrict myself to one superb extract from Professor Santayana which may impress others as much as it impressed me. "The irrational in the human," writes Santayana, "has something about it altogether repulsive and terrible, as we see in the maniac, the miser, the drunkard or the ape. A barbaric civilisation, built on blind impulse and ambition, should fear to awaken a deeper detestation than could ever be aroused by those more beautiful tyrannies, chivalrous or religious, against which past revolutions have been directed." Could a better account of Hitlerism be packed into half a dozen lines?

* * *

A friend has suggested to me that if there are any benefactors of the type of Lord Nuffield still looking for suitable objects of endowment, there could be few better causes than the foundation of scholarships for post-graduate work for students from the universities of the United Nations. He suggests that they should not, like the Rhodes scholarships, be tied to any particular university; that they should be for a year's duration; and that, preferably, they should not follow immediately upon the completion of the first degree, but after an interval of three or four years. He thinks, and I warmly agree with him, that the academic tendency nowadays is to make the period of apprenticeship to learning too long, and that the earlier a young man or woman learns to combine scholarship and life, the more realistic the scholarship is likely to be. Heaven preserve us, after the war, from a vast increase in students for the Ph.D.

HAROLD J. LASKI

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to R. H. Hill.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Nobody in those days thought of calling our headmaster a sadist because he was so free with the cane. Though he put the fear of God into us, we loved him. Indeed, he was more like God than anything I have met in the flesh.—"A Private School at the Dawn of the Century," by G. D. Martineau, in *The Empire Review*, London.

"The Lord's Prayer, sung as a solo, to the accompaniment of Jerry Hoey's band, received the warmest burst of applause at last night's performance of 'Piccadilly Playtime,' a Jack Hylton show at the Theatre Royal, Norwich."—*Eastern Daily Press.*

To-day, delivering of newspapers is an education in itself, bringing the boys in contact with the great British public in their homes; teaching them to judge character and the difference between good and bad; making them self-reliant and business-like; and preparing them for the great adventure of facing the world.—*National Newsagent, Bookseller and Stationer.*

Notice outside a florist's shop in Manor Park London, E.6:

	s.	d.
Wreaths and Crosses.. ..	4	6
Chaplets	5	0
Gates of Heaven	7	6
Harps	7	6
Columns	8	6
Vacant Chair..	10	6

Sir,—Permit me, through the medium of your columns, to appeal to those who have been going out on Sabbaths to "harvest," to try resting on Sabbaths and see if we do not get more dry weather during the week. *Have not our wet Mondays recently been a judgment upon us because of the work which has been done on Sabbaths?—Belfast News Letter.*

THE TUBERCULOSIS REPORT

IN the autumn of last year, at the request of the Ministry of Health, a Committee, with Lord Dawson as its chairman, was appointed by the Medical Research Council to investigate the extent and causes of the wartime increase in the incidence of tuberculosis. The Committees's Report, which has just been issued, has attracted a good deal of attention in the press, and much interest generally. Why? It is certainly an extremely concise summary of existing knowledge as to the means of diagnosing this still all too common disease at a stage at which treatment may be hopefully applied. The principles and difficulties of effective treatment are also discussed in a practical way. Moreover, the Report is written in simple language, commendably free from technical jargon, making it easily understandable not only by doctors, but by all reasonably educated people.

But it is none of these things which so strikingly distinguishes this Report from those of other committees set up at the Government's request. What is almost unique or, at any rate, very unusual, is that the Government has announced, through its responsible Secretary of State, that it is at once taking all possible steps to put into action the principal recommendations of the Committee. There is no question of the Report "receiving the Government's consideration," or being dismissed with any other of the polite formulae which pave the way to the Whitehall pigeon-holes.

The Report was published on Thursday, October 8th, and, on the same day, Mr. E. Brown, the Minister of Health, announced in the House of Commons the active steps which the Government had already taken to bring into operation practically all the Committee's recommendations, from providing for the supply and distribution of the expensive and at present scarce sets of equipment for mass radiography and other diagnostic appliances to the minimising of the financial anxiety often experienced by those under treatment, by assuming full responsibility for the maintenance of the patient's home and dependents. Tuberculosis has to some extent taken the place of typhoid fever as a disease which is pretty sure to increase in incidence in the course of a prolonged war. Signs of such an increase have already begun to show themselves in the last couple of years. In order to preserve our sense of proportion, however, do not let us forget the magnitude of the progressive fall in the tuberculosis death-rate even in the present century, a temporary halt in which fall during the present war has rightly caused a certain degree of concern. A corresponding check took place in the years between 1914 and 1918; but the circumstances and the nature of the check were rather different. In the first years of the present century, the standardised death-rate from all forms of tuberculosis was over 17,000 per million living. By 1936 this proportion had fallen to 6½ thousand per million living, or little more than one-third of the figure obtaining 36 years earlier. This great improvement, it is generally agreed, is due to the marked rise in the standard of living of the poorer classes in this country, especially in diet, and, to a smaller extent, in housing. It is, perhaps, not irrelevant to note that it is in these two respects that the greatest change has taken place in the environment and circumstances of our civilian population during the present war. Owing to evacuation, voluntary and compulsory, from heavily bombed or threatened towns and cities to already fully populated districts, much additional overcrowding has taken place. This has naturally caused a good deal of mixing of infected with uninfected families. Overcrowding in shelters and the herding together in close mutual proximity of all and sundry, and also the difficulties of adequate ventilation of domestic sleeping quarters owing to the necessary black-out precautions, are new and temporary factors which could hardly have been avoided. Rationing and other measures for the distribution of food have been organised and carried out with great skill, fairness and regard for scientific findings, by the Ministry of Food; but there is no escaping the fact that the slightly ailing and those with sensitive digestions are finding things none too easy. In the last number of the *British Medical Journal* is a very interesting article on "Tuberculosis in London in Wartime," by the Medical Officer of Health to the L.C.C. He gives figures which show that the experience of London has been less favourable than that of England and Wales as a whole; and that, whilst in 1941 the increase in the number of cases notified of tuberculosis in children under fourteen years of age was about four times as great a percentage of the child population as was that in 1938, the parallel increase in the percentage of notification at ages above fourteen was about one-quarter only. In London, where nearly all the milk is pasteurised, the principal infecting source is shown to be human, both the incidence and mortality of bovine tuberculosis being comparatively small. In the country, where much of the milk consumed is neither pasteurised nor boiled, bovine tuberculosis seems to be more common. But exposure to infection can no longer be regarded as the only factor directly bearing on the mortality rate of tuberculosis. Five years ago, in an article in the *Practitioner*, Dr. Morland pointed out that two-thirds of the cases notified as suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis already had the disease in a moderately or far advanced form at the time of diagnosis. "A few years ago I found, on investigating one hundred histories of consecutive cases drawn from the upper classes of Society, that in only 40 per cent. was the diagnosis made within three months of the first overt symptoms of the disease, and ten of these forty made the diagnosis easy by spitting blood." Dr. Morland goes on to say that whilst the stethoscope rightly occupies a place of honour in clinical medicine, its uses do not include the elimination of pulmonary tuberculosis. "If applied to this purpose it becomes a public danger, as most cases are no longer early by the time physical signs appear." The important point is that early pulmonary tuberculosis has no physical signs and often no symptoms. Quite logically, D'Arcy Hart, in his Milroy Lecture in 1937, maintained that "the mass examination by X-rays of groups of apparently healthy people was the only way of effectively increasing the proportion of cases diagnosed in the early stages of the disease." In a leading article last January, the *Lancet* reminded us that people have been taught that tuberculosis is preventible, that early detection is simple, that treatment instituted in good time leads to arrest and recovery, that sanatorium treatment is available for all who may be unfortunate enough to become affected, and that a stay of a few months in delightful country surroundings will ensure an early return to home and duty. "There is scarcely one of these teachings true in a strict sense; for it is impossible to prevent infection in the community as a whole; the early detection of the disease is one of the most formidable problems confronting doctors, and treatment cannot be instituted in good time for the great majority of cases, because the lesions are relatively advanced when they are first detected." In a further leader in the *Lancet* of March 21st, 1942, it is pointed out that, if the whole method of radiography is not to be discredited, "and if hardships and misery from faulty diagnosis are to be eliminated, as much thought must be given to the training of personnel as to the choice of apparatus ... If a worker submits voluntarily to examination, he will naturally ask that he and his family are not to suffer financially while he is undergoing treatment for what, in his opinion, might have healed at work. Tuberculosis is coming to be regarded more and more as a disease of economics; good food and freedom from worry about dependants are essential concomitants of cure. The real problem is to avoid victimisation of the worker; a Government subsidy is an inevitable corollary to large-scale mass-radiography."

As to the effect of the increased propaganda and the improved facilities for diagnosis at tuberculosis dispensaries, recent figures are not encouraging. Wing-Commander Trail, of the Surgical Unit, Papworth, in the very last number of the *Lancet*, tells us that in 1927, of adult patients admitted to residential treatment for pulmonary tuberculosis under the L.C.C. scheme, only 6 per cent. were classified as B.1 at the time of admission; and 78.4 per cent. as B.2 or B.3. In 1937, that is ten years later, 5.7 per cent. were B.1 and 80.3 per cent. B.2 or B.3. Evidently no improvement toward earlier diagnosis was made in ten years. Can we wonder that so "few survive for five years after discharge from sanatorium treatment?" Patients discharged in 1932 from L.C.C. residential institutions and traced till 1937 give the following survival rates: For B.2 cases, 41.2 per cent.; for B.3 cases, 7.9 per cent.; the survival rates for B.1 cases being 81 per cent. These are the kind of facts which were established before the Dawson Committee was appointed. They have for some time been accepted as proved by practically everyone directly concerned with the tuberculosis problem. They are all taken into account in the small pamphlet (issued by H.M. Stationery Office and sold for 9*d.*) embodying the Report of the Committee on Tuberculosis in Wartime, and in it the practical measures thought necessary are summarised with directness and sufficient particularity. The important and significant fact which should give hope and fresh enthusiasm to all engaged in planning for a better and healthier world, who base their recommendations on demonstrable truths, is that the Government has taken steps to implement this Report.

Harry Roberts

ANONYMOUS PORTRAITS

I.—THE CRANK

The one entirely self-revealing sentence he wrote has never been exactly translated. The original says: *In der Groesse der Luege liegt immer ein Faktor des Geglaubtwerdens.* An exact rendering is difficult because the sentence has no logical structure; it is a mystic's proposition in his own grammar. The nearest approximation would be: "The Greatness of a lie always contains an element of being believed." Note that the verb "contains" is related not to "lie" but to "greatness." "Greatness" here has a mystical double meaning: it stands both for quantity (a big lie) and for grandeur, majesty. Now this majestic lie, the apothesis of the Absolute Untruth, is said to *contain* the quality of being believed. In other words, the lie is not laboriously constructed so as to be believed; it is born by intuition and its very greatness automatically compels adoration. This is one of the keys to the Crank's mysticism; actually the one which opened for him the door to power. Obviously, if the key was strange, the lock must have been even stranger.

But the lock is a problem for the historian; we are only concerned with the key. The Crank in his unhappy youth knocked at many doors, and was always refused. He tried his hand as an artist, but his sunsets in aquarelle did not sell. He worked on a building site, but was refused the fraternity of his fellow workers because he drank milk instead of beer, and made crankish speeches. He joined the Army, but never got further than his first stripe. He lived in Salvation Army shelters, under bridge-vaults, and in casual wards; he mixed with the *Lumpen-proletariat*, the nomadic outcasts in the no-man's-land of society. This period lasted for several years; it was a unique experience for a future statesman. Here the master-key began to take its first rough shape, the shape of a sovereign contempt for the people. True, he mistook the refuse for the substance, but this mistake proved to be an asset not a liability. He divined that the mentality of the crowd is not the sum total of the mentality of the individuals which form it, but their lowest common denominator; that their intellectual powers are not integrated by contact but bewildered by the interference of their minds—light plus light resulting in darkness; that their emotional vibrations, however, increase by induction and self-induction like the current in a wire coil. By descending into the bottom strata of society the Crank made the discovery of his life: the discovery of the lowest common denominator. The master key was found.

Its magic worked first on its owner. The frustrated Crank became the inspired Crank. His face in those early years, an unshaped pudding with a black horizontal dot, came to life as the lights of obsession were switched on behind the eyeballs. The features of it retained their crankish ridiculousness, with the black dot under the upturned nose and the second black dot pasted on the forefront, but it now assumed the grotesque horror of a totem-mask worn at ritual dances where human sacrifices are performed. His shrill voice became even shriller, an entranced incantation, while the catchwords it conveyed were simple in their ever-repeated monotony, like the rhythmical beating of the tom-tom in the bush. He knew it and in those early days called himself the Drummer.

He first spoke at small meetings and tried the formula: disintegration of the intellect by interference, increase of the crowd-emotion by induction. It worked. Now those were the days after his nation's defeat, when certain powers were on the search for useful cranks to divert the energies of the embittered populace, and they discovered that this was a very useful crank. Though its effect became visible only later this was a historic event: the key had met the lock.

History is always written in terms of keys and locks; the keys are shaped by subjective individual factors, the locks by objective constellations in the structure of society. If the course of history is determined in its broad outlines, there is always a margin left for undetermined. It is the margin of chance in all probability calculations; the chance of a given lock constellation meeting a key which fits, and vice versa. How many potential Wellingtons died as retired Colonels in Cheltenham we cannot know. And vice versa: if the Gracchi had been a little less dilettanti, Rome might have survived; and if this Crank had been killed in time, Weimar might have survived and the present war postponed or even avoided. As it is, men must die with open eyes to fill in the blind margin of chance; and the danger that this may happen again, that another future Crank may discover the master-key to the masses, will persist—until the lowest common denominator of men has gradually been lifted to a level beyond his reach. This, perhaps, is the basic issue between Democracy and the Crank.

Arthur Kœstler

"THE HOUSE OF REGRETS"

The curtain at the Arts Theatre Club rises on an ikon high in the corner of a sitting-room, and a table laden with Easter cakes and eggs, for a handful of survivors from Tsarist Russia have been thrown up on the West Kensington shore, animate jetsam maintaining a frail fingerhold on life till 1939, by clinging to the past, dreaming regretfully or even hopefully of the splendours typified by Fabergé. A general aged 75 is replanning for the thousandth time the tactics for driving the Reds out of Petersburg—with cavalry. A choreographer, aged 87, is rearranging the dances for *Le Lac des Cygnes*, and in falsetto French croaking at the odious modernities of Fokine and Rimsky-Korsakov. A faded *élégante* with a set smile of sweetness chatters about the charm of God, a faded frump is obliged to keep explaining that her father was not a famous painter, but only his younger brother. An admiral of 82 is alone in seeing that the past is past. (He even welcomes the fact.) The general's old batman completes the frieze of lamentable senility.

A contrast is afforded by the general's grandchildren, Anglicised and belonging to a different universe, the boy in the Army, the girl imagining herself a Communist. But these are as conventional as characters in musical comedy. Are we to conclude that Mr. Ustinov is a mere specialist in the subspecies of senility, able to create only character parts? Perhaps not, for much the most interesting and successful person is the general's daughter, a middle-aged woman defined by no peculiarities, who, by goodness of heart and sheer elbow-grease, supports the whole reliquary household. But I am not sure that the effective vitality of this figure is not due chiefly to Miss Susan Richards, every detail of whose performance from the accent to the gait is faultless.

Mr. Ustinov plants his characters sharply and solidly before us, though he succumbs too often to caricature and even cruelty. But what, one wonders, can happen to these pantaloons? They are too decrepit to be affected by anything but death; no event in the present, no secret exhumed from the past, could alter their course. And in fact nothing does happen—except the war; and that makes no difference. The only surprises in the action (and these are mild enough, some shabby behaviour by shadowy younger characters) never come to the ears of the protagonists. The technique is modelled on Chehov, but in Chehov things occur. Hopes are banished; life breaks in and flies away again; at the end the characters are in a changed situation. In *The House of Regrets* there are quarrels, too many, indeed, and hysteria, but there is no development. We are convinced by the personages, we are amused, we are sometimes moved. We are also sometimes bored. For they repeat themselves remorselessly; the General, in particular, becomes, as the acts proceed, a dreary mechanism. Nevertheless the dialogue is vivid and telling; the exotic subject provides a vastly welcome change from our common theatrical fare—and so does the sardonic point of view. We are grateful to Mr. Ustinov for the intelligence of his invention, although the result is a portrait-gallery rather than a play. And next time, one hopes, he will have achieved sympathy with his characters.

Miss Susan Richards, as I have hinted, offers us great acting. Mr. John Ruddock made the admiral most impressive; Messrs. Noel Willman, Max Adrian and Gibb McLaughlin ran through their antics most effectively. The old choreographer's dance just failed to be moving, because the actor could not suggest a smouldering residue of elegance. Miss Christine Silver and Miss Josephine Middleton helped the author by never indulging in caricature—two admirable performances; and one would have liked more of Miss Miki Iveria. Mr. Julian Dallas gave a pretty sketch of shiftiness. The set by Nadia Benois is excellent, and Mr. Alec Clunes's production is nothing if not animated. This is a play to see, and Mr. Ustinov promises to be a considerable playwright.

Roger Marvell

MILLER'S

The exhibition of French and English drawings, which was opened last week by Sir Kenneth Clark, is perhaps as good as any yet seen in this admirable gallery in the Lewes high street. That is saying much. To be sure, the earlier English water-colourists are not seen at their best, though Turner's *On the Moselle* is delicious; but all the other nineteenth century schools are well represented. Probably the *Nude* by Ingres from Lord Keynes's collection is the *clou* of the show. It is the master at his best; that is to say it is a masterpiece in the tradition of Raphael and Holbein. Like them, Ingres could say all there was to say about a form in line: no need for him to model inside the contour. In *The Toilet* Degas shows himself a worthy descendant. Here again—in the drawing of the left thigh and buttock at all events—we find a contour so nervous and intense that it renders the whole of the content. How casual by comparison appears Bonnard's *Nude* (49); yet, if not quite a match for the Ingres or the Degas, it runs them close. It is not often that we see a drawing by Chassériau these days; and to see one so good as this, No. 11, from Sir Kenneth Clark's collection, is an event. Géricault is another rarish artist here seen to advantage. Corot and Millet are well represented; Constantin Guys less well. There is a lovely little water-colour by Renoir, another by Pissarro, and a fine, precise drawing by Matisse: both Rouaults are remarkable; one gets a fair notion of Segonzac and Modigliani, and just a taste of Picasso. Of the English, Sickert and Duncan Grant hold their own handsomely with their French contemporaries. Henry Moore and Tunnard represent, and do credit to, a younger generation. One cannot help wondering whether Gaudier Breska was quite as good a draughtsman as one thought he was. CLIVE BELL

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Englishman Builds," at the National Gallery

The purpose of this exhibition is first to summarise lucidly and simply the past of architecture in England and secondly to suggest the lines on which it should now develop. Mr. Ralph Tubbs, who is responsible for it, arranged a previous exhibition called *Living in Cities*, which was reproduced in an admirable Penguin book. His technique is brilliant: photographs tell the story with a minimum of letterpress, and suggest in a lively fashion the nature not only of the buildings but of our ancestors for whom they were built. The exhibition jumps straight from Gothic to Palladian, presumably because the Elizabethans and Jacobeans contributed little to the functional use of material which it is a chief purpose of the photographs to illustrate. This must be regretted, for some knowledge of building during the lives of Shakespeare and Milton is an essential part of visual education. It is a pity, again, that the modern building most fully illustrated should be a house at Halland, which has little æsthetic value, which is unsuited to our climate, and which belies the title of the exhibition, not being the work of an Englishman. It is a house fronted entirely with glass; but the fact that steel construction makes such buildings possible does not therefore make them desirable, or even "functional." To live in such a house would be like living in a shop-window. Despite these criticisms, the exhibition can be strongly recommended. It is masterly in arrangement and stimulating in effect.

"Waltz Without End," at the Cambridge
"Lilac Time," at the Stoll

Chopin is the latest victim of commercialisation, and in *Waltz Without End* various ballades, nocturnes and valses have been crudely torn from their settings, manhandled and distorted, in order to adorn a weak libretto, already decked in the trappings of Hollywood mawkishness. It is lamentable that a number of "pretty tunes," some with completely revised tempos, should be offered to the public as by Chopin. Very likely Messrs. Maschwitz and Grun will have a considerable success with this production, but it is certainly guaranteed to disgust those who care for Chopin. The *lieder* of Schubert, however, are ready-made for the librettist of a musical play, and *Lilac Time*, which now bursts upon the world almost as regularly as the lilac tree puts forth its blossom, contains some of the most lovely of Schubert's songs. The words are trivial, but so often were the original verses that the composer used for his settings; the gaiety of the Viennese lilt is infectious, and the songs can be repeatedly heard. In both productions there is some good singing, but *Lilac Time* has the more distinguished cast.

"Christopher Columbus," B.B.C. Home Service

The B.B.C. made an excuse of Anglo-American relations to give a two-and-a-half hours' drama last Monday on the subject of Christopher Columbus. It may well prove a landmark, and is certainly the most ambitious attempt at producing a drama purely for broadcasting that has yet been made. Mr. Louis MacNeice, preferring the fact to the legend of Columbus, wrote a text in verse which moved from poetry and angry eloquence to colloquial speech without losing its identity, and this was an immense advance on the rather pretentious declamation of Macleish and others who have tried to join poetry and broadcast drama. Walton's music—which included songs, choruses, fanfares, a few chords to stress atmosphere or a change of scene—was not merely added to, but formed an essential part of the play. Walton's guitar song and MacNeice's evocation of the procession of Columbus's return were the peaks of the evening. The two together, text and music, provided a real continuity, of the sort that we take for granted in films, but that has yet to be developed for broadcasting. Laurence Olivier took the part of Columbus, and not only did justice to the text but conveyed passionate energy and vision by remarkably simple means. The rest of an all-star cast did more than support. Miss Hedli Anderson sang remarkably; only Miss Margaret Rawlings was ineffective, and seemed entirely to have misjudged her part.

THE MOVIES

"Coastal Command," at the Plaza and Carlton
"Tortilla Flat," at the Empire
"Moontide," at the Odeon
"Yankee Doodle Dandy," at Warner's

Good week for talkies. No sexies or sloppies or sleepies or sickies, fewer wishies and wishy-washies than usual, with artisticals soaring. In glorious black-and-white. It's sensational, it's terrific, etc. I have been reading the sheets that are handed out with even the best of films.

Coastal Command is the companion piece to *Target fro To-night*. It is feature-length, and what it lacks in quick drive and news value is more than made up by the ample setting and accumulative excitement of sweeps over the Atlantic. It is, in fact, as good a film as Harry Watt. Produced by Crown Film Unit, directed by J. B. Holmes. If one wants to pick out our "best film of the war" I should choose this one and not Mr. Coward's much boosted *In Which We Serve*. The film tells us a great deal about the workings of Coastal Command, the co-operation of flyers, ground staff and operations room (and also, one is glad to note, of R.A.F. and Royal Navy), but tells it in such a way that every close-up or panorama adds to the suspense, poetry and exultation of the theme. What is new, perhaps, beyond a sustained loveliness of photography, is the note of exultation as the Sunderland takes off at dusk, hangs over miles of ocean, breaks cloud to discover an enemy raider; this is emphasised by Vaughan Williams's score. *Coastal Command* seems to me a faultless job.

Both *Tortilla Flat* and *Moontide* are exceptionally well directed and acted, and show a touch of imagination rare in films. The first comes from an early novel by John Steinbeck, which possesses literary as well as documentary possibilities. "Literary," as applied to films, is usually a damning word, because what makes for imaginative delight in reading can't possibly be photographed: what would be left of Sterne if *Tristram Shandy* were filmed? But the literary appeal of *Tortilla Flat* is rooted in the characters; they moon, they drink and dream, they rob one another, they lie, they weave a lackadaisical web always in danger of being torn by violence; and fantasy floats off their talk like the smell of dinner cooking. This backwater of Spanish-Portuguese-Mexicans settled on the Southern California coast exudes talk and character as sweet as O'Casey's Dublin. Squalor and fecklessness and pipe-dreaming lead here to casual adventure, and the most delicious side of the film concerns an old tramp who marshals his "boys" along the roads and preaches to themin the forest—the "boys" being five attentive dogs of the most diverse kind. Mr. Frank Morgan in this peach of a role behaves beautifully, and his dogs are almost as good. The Paycock of the film is Spencer Tracy, and if one rates his performance below the other, it is because he has too much to keep up and seems at times a shade uncertain of his footholds. John Garfield and Hedy Lamarr lure and spit and coo. Altogether *Tortilla Flat* succeeds where *The Tuttles of Tahiti*—another comedy of dilapidation—failed. The material is authentic, and so is the fantasy. In the course of adventure two houses have come as a legacy out of the blue, and very appropriately they both go up in flames. Someone chucks a match-end over his shoulder and there you are; they all shuffle out, lean on a railing outside to enjoy the blaze, and one goes back to rescue the bottle of wine.

Moontide represents an alliance, roughly, of *Quai des Brumes* and *Petrified Forest*. Jean Gabin, bars with mechanical pianos, a waterfront, a barge cabin, drifting mists, drink and love and murder and attempted suicide, and a cast including Ida Lupino, Thomas Mitchell and Claude Rains. Archie Mayo (responsible for *Petrified Forest*) directs; and though *Moontide* is not so memorable as the earlier film, it will help to fill the gap left by the disappearance of French films. Gabin is his old self, while talking new American, Thomas Mitchell has turned villain and repels as he once appealed, Ida Lupino gets better and better, and finishes here with suicide in the first quarter of an hour. Tension eases and the mists dissolve rather rapidly at the end, but *Moontide* is a good film that in the old days would have been damned as highbrow.

And Cagney in *Yankee Doodle Dandy*. This is one of the few musicals I have thoroughly enjoyed. It is a biography—how accurate I don't know—of "an American institution," George M. Cohan, comedian, song-writer and producer. His patriotism brings him an invitation to the White House and a decoration at the hands of the President. There is more than a tinge of music-hall patriotism in the film, which is remarkable for its racy direction and for a performance by Cagney at the top of his form. He struts, dances and sings like Disney's cock-of-the-walk come to life. What a bantam! This is better than Cagney the bruiser, and very much better than Cagney the indulgent elder brother.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

THE STRANGER

By ALEXANDER BLOK (1906)

Over the restaurants on sultry evenings
  The stale hot vapours rise,
And a corrupting spirit born of springtime
  Sounds in the drunken cries.

Over the boredom of suburban villas,
  The alleys dusty dry,
Glimmers the golden sign above the baker's,
  And tired children cry.

And every night beyond the level crossings,
  With bowler hats askew,
Saunter the local wits with girls a-giggle,
  To criticise the view.

Over the lake is heard the creak of rowlocks,
  And female screams resound,
While high above, the moon, surprised at
    nothing,
  Grins meaningless and round.

And every night my glass reflects my image,
  Friend of my solitude,
Who by the strange wine's aromatic power,
  As I am, is subdued.

The sleepy waiters, stuck beside the tables,
  Watch for an empty glass,
While drunken men, with eyes like rabbits',
    bellow:
  "In vino veritas."

But every evening at the fated hour—
  Or is it just my dream?—
A figure moves across the misted window,
  A girl in silks that gleam.

Slowly she passes through the drunken rabble,
  Companionless and fair,
And by the window sits, a mist of perfume
  Spread round her in the air.

Her silken waist, her hat of sable feathers,
  Her narrow hand with rings,
Seem to exhale a breath of long forgotten
  And legendary things.

Tranced by the wonder of her nearness, striving
  To pierce her shadowy veil,
I look on an enchanted shore, a distance
  Beyond some magic pale.

Unspoken mysteries to me are given,
  Another's sun is mine;
Transfused through every corner of my being,
  Steals the astringent wine.

Within my brain the drooping ostrich feathers
  Wave languidly and sweep;
Blue on that distant shore the eyes that flower,
  Immeasurably deep.

Safe in my soul there lies a hoarded treasure,
  Whose key is only mine.
O, you were right indeed, you drunken monsters:
  The truth is found in wine.

Translated by FRANCES CORNFORD

Correspondence

VANSITTARTISM

SIR,—I am delighted to find my vivid and lucid friend Harold Laski taking the London Diary for a month, and the more so because I find him writing in tones of horror and condemnation of something he calls "Vansittartism." He, I think, will be able to tell me exactly where I err in finding Vansittart's analysis of the militant tradition in Germany true and urgently important. Vansittart's case is that the tradition dominating the education af the German community has been distinctively militant and aggressive, and that a phase of complete disarmament and sedulous re-education for Germany is necessary before the world can risk a third onslaught upon its security. I cannot find any open and honest justification for the outcry and misrepresentation Vansittart has occasioned, and I am amazed to find Laski lending himself to it. I can understand a vast number of pecuniary and social influences willing to support the misrepresentation of Vansittart's horrid veracity. It is, no doubt, good for the immediate prospects of the armaments industry and for the intricate social, political and business interests which will collapse if this war should indeed prove to be a war to end war. Long before the Germans heard of Vansittart, the misrepresentation of his views and motives had been sedulously digested and organised in this country, to distort the objectives of our war. Is this a matter of national policy or why is it done? Here is Laski doing it. He must have his reasons—completely hidden from me. He is often so exceptionally well-informed about things, that I implore him to tell me why this sustained misrepresentation of Vansittart goes on.

H. G. WELLS

[My old and excitable friend H. G. Wells will have noticed that I put "Vansittartism" in inverted commas. I used it as the most convenient shorthand now available for those who are developing the old and stale theory of the guilty nation which must be punished. I assume that Mr. Wells shares my view that talk of a criminal nation is so much nonsense. The crimes of the Nazis are a different matter.—H. J. L.]

COMMON WEALTH

SIR,—Harold Laski, in his comments last week upon Common Wealth, assumes that the movement is ephemeral mainly because he cannot see the bridge between aspiration and action. Speaking quite personally, there is so much political battle smoke in the foreground that I cannot see the bridge either. But my map says the bridge is there, and if, when we reach the place, we find that it has been blown up, we will have to improvise another one. In the meantime two tasks confront us. First to play our part in the creation of the will that the river shall be reached and crossed, and then to build up and inspire such organisations as will prove to each man who possesses this will that he is not an isolated soldier, but part of a mighty army which can find the means of constructing the bridge when the river is reached.

If we shirk these tasks, obviously we shall build no bridges. Common Wealth is facing these tasks. Harold Laski may be correct in prophesying failure. But we at any rate shall not fail for want of trying. We will welcome the co-operation of anyone with any practical experience of handling political pontoons, or indeed of anyone who, without this experience, would like to learn.

RICHARD ACLAND

P.S.—Laski says he has no knowledge of the reasons for the disintegration of the Common Wealth group. Common Wealth is not a group. In so far as it is to be identified with any individuals, it should be identified with the several hundred men and women all over the country who, in our branches, are trying to pull together little islands of political self-leadership. There is no indication whatever that any of these is disintegrating. Rather the contrary. And when it comes to it, a lot of little islands sometimes afford the foundations for a bridge.

RELIGION IN SCHOOLS

SIR,—Having spent a good deal of time during the past two years in discussing with teachers in many parts of the country the problem of religious teaching in schools, I should be the last to minimise their difficulties, or to depreciate the efforts which many of them are making to meet them.

But the evidence adduced by Professor Laski in his "London Diary" in your issue of October 3 is so misleading in some respects that it calls for some comment. He cites a letter from a schoolmaster in a Church school, "a keen Anglican" and with twenty years' experience. His correspondent puts forward the view that "the dogma of any particular church" has nothing to do with the attempt to "convey certain canons of conduct," and that its content is such that it is impossible to teach it to children under fifteen without employing methods which no reputable teacher would wish to use.

One might hesitate to accept either of these statements without fuller indication of what is implied in "the dogma of any particular Church," though one would cordially sympathise with the unwillingness to impress upon children's minds the points which divide rather than unite Christians. But one is compelled to raise a query when the writer proceeds to draw from these two premises the conclusion that no religious instruction should be given in schools, the Bible being taught only as "great literature."

May I put the point quite simply? Is the attempt to make the Christian idea of the nature of God as Creator and Father a "dogma of any particular Church"? If not, why can it not be taught as part of religious instruction? One would have thought that by now its relevance to the inculcation of canons of conduct was beginning to be realised afresh.

Professor Laski's correspondent goes on to deplore the fact that few of the teachers whom he has known possess a standard of competence in religious teaching comparable to that which they possess in other subjects. He does not state the inference which he draws from that. The inference which the teachers themselves are drawing from it is to be found in the fact that the demand for Refresher Courses in religious knowledge since the issue of Circular 1566 already outstrips the not inconsiderable supply which has been available.

F. A. COCKIN, Canon of St. Paul's.

A WORD ABOUT FREE ITALY

SIR,—On Thursday Oct. 1st, readers of *Hansard* would have found the following exchange of remarks between Mr. Ivor Thomas, Socialist M.P. for Keighley, and the Foreign Secretary, which had taken place on the previous afternoon in the House of Commons:

> Mr. Ivor Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs why he has ruled that the British Council may not support the scheme for an anti-Fascist Italian Centre in London, analogous to the Allied Centres already established by the Council?
>
> *Mr. Eden:* My hon. friend overlooks the fact that Italy is not an ally but an enemy power and my hon. friend's analogy does not apply. The British Council, whose activities in any case are cultural and not political, have lent their support to national centres of Allied countries and of Occupied Countries whose National Councils are recognised by His Majesty's Government.
>
> *Mr. Thomas:* Has the Foreign Office given any support to the Austrian Centre which is analogous, and why does the Foreign Office frustrate every attempt by anti-Fascists to organise themselves, whether in a fighting force, by a newspaper or in a Centre?
>
> *Mr. Eden:* I do not accept a single one of the hon. gentleman's remarks and I repeat that we are not necessarily prepared to encourage enemy aliens to organise in our midst.

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FRANK SWINNERTON, *Observer*

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JONATHAN CAPE

This brief exchange is interesting. I have seen the project for "an Italian Centre in London," and, having studied it carefully, I have come to the conclusion that Mr. Thomas's question was somewhat inaccurately phrased. The scheme outlines something so essentially non-political and so clearly meant to be a social and educational centre among a very large Italian colony, the majority of which is English by birth or naturalisation, but which speaks English badly and hardly knows this country; a colony that has been persistently neglected by us and nursed by a lavish and enterprising "Fascio di Londra," that to call it an "anti-Fascist Centre" is incorrect. There already exists a Free Italy Movement in London for Italians who desire to work for a change of government in their own country, and that Movement exists entirely by its own labours and subscriptions.

But, however ungainly Mr. Thomas's questions were, it is difficult to understand the bluntness and obtuseness of Mr. Eden's final reply. Mr. Eden may despise Fascist policy, and who does not, but if he despises *Italians* that is unfortunate in a Foreign Secretary, who is supposed to be preparing post-war European policies, not to mention plans for getting Italy out of the war as soon as possible.

General Sir Archibald Wavell is a greater statesman as regards Italy. The *Times* Delhi correspondent sent a message, published in the *Times* on Saturday Oct. 3rd., about General Wavell's good wishes to the first number of a weekly four-page newspaper for circulation among Italian prisoners of war in India. "It is intended," wrote General Wavell, "that the paper should print nothing but the truth. It will, however, include official communiqués of all the powers at war." The newspaper, we are told, "is in Italian, of course, and is edited with British co-operation by a staff of volunteers from among the prisoners themselves. Its columns are thrown open to anyone in the camps, and in giving straight news from the world's capitals—a novelty for many readers—it is intended so far as possible to follow an impartial line."

Ten thousand copies of the first number were printed for many times that number of Wavell's prisoners, among whom, we are told, there are more than 50 generals.

There is something refreshing, modern and intelligent about the General's action. One longs for something of the kind in our propaganda to Italy, which is, after all, mainly listened to by men and women who are in a special sense "prisoners of war," or they would not take the trouble to go on listening to London.

We understood these things better in Mazzini's day and were proud, publicly proud in the House of Commons, to have him here as an exile from a despotic Italian Government. Our present Italian exiles include not a few distinguished men and a good number of first-rate representatives of a Free Italian movement that is numbered by millions on the other side of the Atlantic.

I do not believe that the argument "but we are waging total war with Italy" is the slightest excuse for such replies as Mr. Eden gave on September 30th in the Commons. In his case I believe it is an unfortunate personal bias, not altogether infrequent among Englishmen who have got on extremely well in France. General Wavell, whose task it was to *fight* the Italians, has tackled the problem, within the strict limits of the Geneva Convention, with a new weapon, truth.

SYLVIA SPRIGGE

CHAINING OF PRISONERS

SIR,—It is with the deepest regret that I learn of our Government's decision to put German prisoners of war here, and in Canada, in chains in order to retaliate for the atrocious behaviour of the German higher command.

The Nazi decision to manacle the Dieppe prisoners deserves the severest punishment to those who committed this latest crime, when that is possible after the war.

But what conceivable good can it do our men suffering in Germany likewise to ill-treat prisoners here? It merely means that this added unnecessary beastliness of war will continue on both sides, and that we ourselves are following the German lead of punishing innocent hostages when the real culprits cannot be punished.

If the Government's decision is revised there is still hope that the Germans will desist from ill-treating our men. To revise the decision is in no way appeasement, it is merely upholding the traditions for which we are fighting.

If the war is prosecuted vigorously the time of reckoning will surely come later. PHILIP HUGH-JONES

TENNYSON

SIR,—I write to correct a mistake in your Mr. Mortimer's article on Tennyson in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of October 10th.

"Is it not," he asks, "the poems written before Tennyson was forty that place him among the gods? Even *In Memoriam*, with all its felicities, seems in comparison rather flat."

It is, of course, well known to most students that *In Memoriam* was begun long, long before Tennyson was forty and written during the two decades preceding his attainment of that age. Mr. Mortimer was no doubt misled by the fact that it was not published until 1850, when Tennyson was forty, seventeen years after its earliest passages were composed.

JOHN SPARROW

[Mr. Mortimer writes: "I apologise for my carelessness. I should have said '*In Memoriam*, on which the poet worked for seventeen years, already reveals in its weakest passages the slow saddening decline of the sacred flame.'"—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

COUNTRY VALUES

SIR,—May I point out an inaccuracy in Prof. Joad's review of my book in your issue of October 10th? Faithful to the modern doctrine of the inevitability of automatic progress, Prof. Joad shakes his head at me that, as good husbandry belongs to the pre-mechanical past, we have something to learn from it. He then goes on to say that the "wise man" would not dream of learning anything from a past in which the agricultural labourer was paid twelve shillings a week. Prof. Joad is evidently unaware of the fact that this period belongs to the post-enclosure and post-mechanical epoch. In the pre-enclosure and pre-mechanical one, the labourer did not depend on wages for a living, but on cultivating his own land in co-operation with his fellows. That was the period I was referring to in my book, not to that of pauper labour, hanging for sheep-stealing and transportation. Prof. Joad is a well-known philosopher, but in matters agricultural a singularly poor historian.

H. J. MASSINGHAM

CAT AND MOUSE

SIR,—While your correspondent J.P. is mistaken in thinking that conditionally registered conscientious objectors are required to submit to medical examination, his letter is a welcome indication that many magistrates recognise the objectionable nature of a system which they feel it their duty to operate.

It is earnestly hoped that those magistrates who so appreciate the difficulties of their position will take such action as their office makes possible to remove this blot from British law. NANCY BROWNE

ARMY PAY

SIR,—I was interested in the contrast drawn by H. A. Copeman between the pay of the subaltern and the pay of the most junior Administrative grade in the Civil Service. In the War Office you get officers on the military side and civilians on the finance side, often in parallel organisations dealing with similar problems. The Assistant Principal at just over 15*s*. a day and no extras has as his double on the military side not a mere 2/Lt., but either a Captain at 16*s*. 6*d*. a day, or very often a Major at 28*s*. 6*d*. a day *plus* the numerous services in kind that your correspondent mentions.

TAPWO

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Lord Ponsonby's Life of his father* is authoritative as history and exquisite as comedy. While there is nothing in it, I think, to change our view of Queen Victoria, it confirms and fills in the picture of her later years that has lately been emerging. Her private secretary from 1870 (and her Privy Purse also from 1878) until his death from overwork in 1895, he had unrivalled opportunities for observing her. He was an uncommonly shrewd judge of character, and he left an immense mass of letters and memoranda in which his judgments were made delightfully articulate. Writing in the lifetime of one of the Queen's daughters, Lord Ponsonby has evidently felt obliged to observe a certain discretion, but the tone of his book is conspicuously honest; and our respectful gratitude must go to the Monarch for permitting the publication of so many valuable documents.

The grandson of the enchanting Lady Bessborough and of the Lord Bathurst responsible for our shabbiness at St. Helena, Henry Ponsonby was born in 1825. He fought in the Crimea, was appointed Equerry to the Prince Consort in 1856, and in 1861 married a lady as genuinely unconventional as she was charming and intelligent. When General Grey died in 1870 Ponsonby was appointed to succeed him as private secretary, despite the opposition of the Duke of Cambridge and Prince Christian, both of whom deplored his radical opinions. This appointment was one of the wisest, or luckiest, decisions ever taken by the Queen. Ponsonby had all the qualities required: worldly wisdom, knowledge of human nature, measureless tact and discretion, a genius for self-effacement, a sense of proportion and "infinite patience in dealing with what was often trivial and sometimes absurd." He was, moreover, profoundly a Liberal, though anything but enthusiastic for Home Rule. As the Queen aged she grew increasingly bigoted in her Conservatism, for she was incapable of adapting herself to changing times, or indeed of taking in any new idea. Disraeli unscrupulously wheedled her into becoming his tool; and her ladies, like her doctor, did all they could to reinforce her partisan prejudices. (Sir Henry thought Peel had been right to demand that the Bedchamber should change with the Government.) If her secretary had been a Tory, the breach with Mr. Gladstone would probably have become open, with unpredictable results. But Ponsonby was tireless in smothering the most dangerous outbreaks. During the perturbations of the Eastern Question in the later Seventies, the Queen's distrust of his anti-Turkish views might have caused a parting but for his tact and a residuum of good sense in her. She was, moreover, undeservedly fortunate in her inability to shake Mr. Gladstone's profound, not to say exaggerated, respect for the Crown. Let me quote from her letters to Sir Henry.

> She will sooner *abdicate* than send for or have any *communication* with *that half-mad fire-brand* who would soon ruin everything and be a *Dictator*. (1880.)
>
> The Queen cannot make up her mind to send for that dreadful old man (not because she has any personal dislike of him) as she utterly loathes his very dangerous politics, the language he has held, the way in which he uses every artifice to get in and whom she can neither respect or trust. (1892.)
>
> The idea of a deluded excited man of 82 trying to govern England and her vast Empire with the miserable democrats under him is quite ludicrous. It is like a bad joke! (1892.)
>
> Lord Rosebery's speech . . . is radical to a degree to be almost communistic. (1892.)
>
> It is degrading to be the so-called Sovereign when such desperate Radicals are in power. (1894.)

Sir Henry's infinitely patient attempts to calm her folly and conceal it brought him many raps over the knuckles. In 1882 she wrote "Sir Henry she fears (being so much inclined to the Liberal Party himself) may not express strongly *enough* her views and fears." His wife, she thought, made him worse. She knew that her secretary was bent upon preventing a public quarrel; she never saw that he was saving her popularity, and perhaps her throne.

Sir Henry describes Disraeli wearing (in 1878) rings on top of his white gloves.

> Gladstone never was sympathetic, never gave in to her ways and, though I believe a far truer friend, yet he certainly did not comply with her wishes as they have been complied with in the last 6 years. Imperial Title, Public Worship Bill and other matters were originated by her and forced through by Beaconsfield on her behalf—though he himself, verily, I believe, disliked them. . . . She has declared she would abdicate rather than submit to dictation. Gladstone once told me that this threat of abdication was the greatest power the Sovereign possessed. (1880.)

Five years earlier he wrote to his wife that Dizzy "has got the length of her foot exactly and knows how to be sympathetic. You and I know that his sympathy is expressed with his tongue in his cheek. But are not her woes told in the same manner?" The Queen's indulgence in self-pity is one of her least amiable and most neurotic traits, and it is interesting to find that Sir Henry thought it largely humbug. Lord Ponsonby's sketch of her character is so just that I must quote it at length:

> She had an accurate memory, and on occasions showed a businesslike capacity. Her almost childish excuse of incomprehension was merely a form of the intense obstinacy she had inherited from her grandfather, George III. She was a woman and could be very capricious, as was shown, for instance, in the occasional and unaccountable relaxations in her usually rigid moral outlook. Far from assuming a consistently ingratiating manner or a stereotyped and smiling amiability, she was incapable of any pretence or of attempting to conceal the severity or disapproval which her facial expression often very clearly betrayed. Yet her latent charm and friendliness broke through with equal naturalness, and at once evoked not only the loyalty but the affection which inspired those who came into close contact with her.

This helps us to understand a little how, despite everything, she succeeded in being liked. Obviously Lord Ponsonby has tried hard to emphasise all the incidents that would tell in her favour; but he has found very few. "It was not exactly that the Queen was markedly inconsiderate, but she was thoughtless of all other considerations where her own comfort and convenience were concerned." A number of episodes exemplify this undeviating selfishness. Sir Henry was not allowed to take a house for his wife at Balmoral as that might deflect his attention from the Queen. Lady Ely, the Queen's favourite lady, complained that the work was killing her, was terrified of her, and was not allowed to receive a call from her own son. The Queen was as nasty to her children as to her entourage. From other sources we know that her eldest son excited from infancy her unnatural hatred. We now see her "sour" because her daughter was enjoying London while she herself was dull at Balmoral, and "furious" because Prince and Princess Christian went to stay at Buckingham Palace. When Connaught, her favourite son, returned after several months' absence, she would not postpone her afternoon drive for one minute in order to receive him. "Will the Queen never find out," Sir Henry was driven to remark, "that she will have ten times more influence on her children by treating them with kindness and not trying to rule them like a despot?" The Prince of Wales certainly presented a problem. His mother's jealousy prevented him from learning to take any part in official business. She had the excuse, Sir Henry reveals, that Granville in 1871 and Disraeli in 1877 had cause to complain of his indiscretion. Mr. Gladstone therefore suggested that he should provide social leadership: "I am convinced that society has suffered fearfully in moral tone from the absence of a pure Court. It was like King Arthur's Round Table in its moral effect." A reading of *The Idylls of the King* must have been behind this suggestion, which helps one to understand why the Queen distrusted Mr. G.'s judgment. "Nothing," says Sir Henry, "could be more genial and pleasant than he is for a few minutes. But he does not endure. He cannot keep up the interest for any length of time. To get the P. of W. to enter into a subject or decide on it is most difficult." This, however, does not excuse the Queen for not consulting him about the Royal Title Bill. She even resented the fact that he behaved with common civility to Mr. Gladstone.

The picture of Balmoral that emerges is comically dismal. Lord Salisbury did not disguise his loathing for it, Campbell-Bannerman compared it to a convent, Sir Henry to a school. The Queen hated warm rooms, so everyone else had to shiver. Communication was by letter. The Queen (who used blue chalk for her chits when especially indignant) preferred writing to talking, "for fear of opposition, controversy or criticism." And the other denizens contracted the same habit. The veriest trifles, Sir Henry noted, became important, and rows were "almost watched for." Minor Royal relatives, the Household, the domestic staff, seethed with mutual dislike, snobbery and jealousy. John Brown was rude and often drunk; when he died the Queen wrote a memoir of him, which her secretary had difficulty in keeping from the public. She then conferred her confidence on an Indian servant who was dangerously indiscreet. Poor Sir Henry could advise and interfere only "in the most gingerly way." I must give one example of his method. The Queen insisted on the smallest details being submitted to her, and once when she was going to Lochmaree on a holiday refused to take more than one housemaid:

> The domestic servants (like the Princesses) never hesitated to make Ponsonby their intermediary. He was asked to object. This is the way he did it. He sent in (abbreviated in his own words): Of course it is quite right that only one housemaid should go for the smaller work. I would send to hire a girl from the hotel. Stray girls were not always very honest. So I hoped the Queen would not leave things about to tempt her. I got an answer that another girl should go from here.

It is highly amusing to hear of these diplomatic negotiations: they remind one alternatively of Talleyrand at a congress and of a lion-tamer cajoling his beasts to leap through a paper hoop. But what an odious, not to say humiliating life!

This book leaves one with the sincerest admiration for Sir Henry. The Queen often treated him as no decent person would treat a second footman. He was something of a saint as well as of a wit; and if he had a fault this book does not reveal it. In one respect only he made, one may think, an error of judgment. "Possibly," he wrote to Mr. Gladstone, "I may sometimes urge Her Majesty to do more than she does with a view to maintaining her position. But I am appalled at the tremendous results whenever she does move." Would he not have been wiser to see that times were changing, and to seek as far as possible to moderate Royal interference quietly, in the way that Lord Stamfordham, one suspects, did during the succeeding reigns?

Lord Ponsonby's book bristles with fascinating details. I should like to see more letters from Col. Arthur Haig—the one given on p. 349 is a masterpiece. But I have space for only one more quotation. The Prince of Wales very sensibly wanted to stop his mother from publishing *More Leaves from the Highlands*; he therefore wrote expressing doubts whether her private life should not "be considered sacred and not exposed." The Queen sent Sir Henry the letter

> which she thinks he will think strange considering how much talk and want of reticence there is in his Home and how little he keeps anything to himself and how continually he lives in Society. . . It is very strange that objection should come from that quarter, where great strictness as to conduct is not generally much cared for.

Every phrase that flowed from that indefatigable pen is beautifully characteristic; indeed, the Queen is no less delightful to read about than Falstaff or Dr. Johnson or Wellington. For the pleasure and instruction that this book afford one cannot be too grateful to Lord Ponsonby. He has carried through a most exacting task with consummate taste and clarity.

Raymond Mortimer

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* Henry Ponsonby, Queen Victoria's Private Secretary. By Arthur Ponsonby (Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede). *Macmillan.* 21s.

NOVELIST'S HISTORY

King James the Last. By Jane Lane. *Andrew Dakers. 12s. 6d.*

Miss Lane is, I gather, a novelist; according to the publisher's blurb, her novels "have established her as probably the most sensitive of living interpreters of the Royal Stuarts." There is no virtue in the history of novelists as such; it has to be good history to be worth the paper it is printed on.

This book about James II has the doubtful advantage of being introduced by another novelist, Mr. Compton Mackenzie, who tells us: "It may be admitted at once that he [James] must have had an exceptional faculty for antagonising those with whom he came in contact. . . . Yet when every explanation for the enduring unpopularity of James II had been examined it might be doubted if a completely satisfactory explanation could ever be found." The explanation is, in fact, simple: he was an obstinate fool with hardly any redeeming traits, who, placed by fortune in very high position, wrecked himself and his cause and very nearly ran the country on the rocks, and all with the air of sanctimonious surprise of the really unintelligent. The truth about him was said long ago by his intelligent, if unadmirable brother, Charles II: "Nobody is going to kill me, Jamie, to make you king." And one recalls that shrewd reprobate's guess that it wouldn't be long before the virtuous fool of a brother had forked himself off the throne. It was, in fact, three years. Yet Mr. Mackenzie asks us: "Who now remembers the real founder of the Royal Navy? Who now remembers the patriot whose dearest thought was England?" The founder of the Royal Navy, indeed! What nonsense: ever heard of the magnificent record of the Commonwealth's great admiral, Blake? One seems to have been taught that there was something of a navy which did something or other under Elizabeth, not to mention Henry VIII or anybody earlier. This kind of nonsense we owe to the Tory rewriting of history in our time, set in motion by Mr. Feiling and Mr. Bryant; and it is time that it came to an end.

This book provides us with an admirable example of the kind of silliness which this "re-interpretation" of English history leads to in the minds of novelists with a great deal of Stuart sentimentality and no grasp of history to speak of. Miss Lane adds to it the fatuous inversion of sense for which Mr. Belloc has been chiefly responsible over the past thirty years, and comes out with the whole box of tricks: the "statesmanship" of Charles II, the Stuart struggle on behalf of the People against the Money-Power, the "weak" reign of Elizabeth, the contemptible character of William III, and so forth. The truth is, this is just history read upside down, and anybody who imbibes it is *ipso facto* incapable of understanding the history of this country or how things came about in it. There are many examples of this all through Miss Lane's book, and not a few gems. It begins:

> It was the dead of the year sixteen hundred and eighty-eight, and it was night. A sick old man stepped down into a shallop which rocked upon the River Medway; he was an Englishman, but he was leaving England for ever, not of choice, but to escape a violent death at the hands of a Dutchman, who was his nephew, and also his son-in-law. That sick old man was the last King of England.
>
> And violent death was threatened him solely because he had dared to exercise the one and only function of Kingship—he had dared to rule. He escaped, but Kingship did not so escape, since that cold December night two hundred and fifty years ago, English Kingship has ceased to exist.

This is ridiculous; this is what I call Upside-down History. It has one advantage: after that it is unnecessary to read the book. We are first treated to a chapter on the Cause, in which we are told "Kingship is as old as the world." (No idea, evidently, how old the world is!) And that "To the ancients it appeared the only natural and reasonable form of government." Never heard, apparently, of Aristotle, who discussed the pros and cons of several forms of government, monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, with their respective perversions, and ultimately declared in favour of a mixed form, "polity"—not unlike that which was so successfully achieved by the Revolution of 1688. After that, one does not much mind Miss Lane's disapprobation of that revolution, or her caricature of William III, or her description of Elizabeth's reign as "weak"; the information has no authority. Nor need one mind the description of England under the great Republic—the England of Milton and Marvell, of Cromwell and Ireton and Blake, of Thurloe and Harington—as "a country long given over to anarchy." It reminds one of the delicious textbook out of which the Bourbon legitimist heir, the Comte de Chambord, learnt his history, which passed over the marvellous period from 1789 to 1815 in French history, the achievements of the Revolution and Napoleon, with these choice words: "During these years the country was a prey to internal anarchy." No wonder the Comte de Chambord so muffed his chance when it came, like James II before him.

It would not be worth while paying any attention to a book of this sort were it not for a few general reflections which it enforces. In the first place history should not be written by non-historians, any more than poetry should be by non-poets, mathematics or music by non-mathematicians or non-musicians. Secondly, since these non-historians often read fluently enough, genuine historians should be more ready to make an appeal to the general public with their works, should learn to write as well and as interestingly as novelists, or otherwise the public, or a section of it, falls into the hands of charlatans. Thirdly, Belloc, Chesterton and Company have built up a whole library of clotted nonsense about English history in the last thirty or forty years, and it needs clearing away. Lastly, even if it were harmless, it should not be encouraged; for at a time like this, it is such a waste of good paper and print, not to mention the time and energies of printers, publishers, advertisers, distributors, readers—and even of a poor reviewer.

A. L. Rowse

WAR AND STRATEGY

This Expanding War. Captain Liddell Hart. *Faber and Faber. 12s. 6d.*

Machine Warfare. Major-General J. F. C. Fuller. *Hutchinson. 8s. 6d.*

Modern Battle. Major Paul W. Thompson. Penguin Special. *9d.*

Few of those who comment on the war in the pages of newspapers would be willing to reprint their estimates and forecasts in book form. Captain Liddell Hart reproduces the articles he wrote during 1941, exactly as they were written; he adds to them a commentary using facts that have become known since these articles were first written, and a number of unpublished papers. It is the strongest possible defence of his view of warfare that could be made. By combining the immediate view and that obtainable after some months of delay he proves the consecutiveness and the integrity of his theories of war, and his power to judge most of the facts so carefully hidden behind the communiqués. What he does not prove is that his theories are correct; only the test of action can prove that.

Two of the principal arguments that he puts forward seem mutually contradictory. One is that defensive tactics and strategy are preferable, at most times and at most places, to offensive tactics and strategy. Liddell Hart writes coolly, and warmth only comes to his pen when he is criticising "the foolish parrot-cry, 'Attack, attack,' that is common in all the democracies—springing from their natural ignorance of war." From this point of view he argues, for instance, that we should not have attacked in Libya in November, 1941: "once it was probable that Rommel intended to take the offensive, there was less need for us to make the opening move. We might have used the opportunity for a counter-offensive . . the side which attempts a long advance in the desert inevitably weakens its chances by stretching its communications."

This argument has a curious sound to-day, when German and Japanese offensives have gained so much, and most efforts at purely defensive tactics and strategy have held so little. To many students of war it will seem an argument from the deadlock of 1914–1918, overthrown by the plain facts of battle since 1939. It is still more curious that this "defence of defence" should be combined, as it is in *This Expanding War*, with a statement of the need for much more armour, in larger units, with less unarmoured troops and vehicles forming part of them. The armoured divisions that exist, and the armoured Corps that Captain Liddell Hart would like us to have, are essentially offensive formations. They are of value for the counter-offensive, as are any units capable of rapid attack; but the essential new factor that they have brought into warfare is their power to breach a defended position and spread out behind it, "lining the pocket with a defensive network of machine-guns and anti-tank guns," and trapping within the pocket thus made a portion of the opposing Army. That is in outline what we tried to do in Libya in November, 1941; it was not a success. But it is hard to believe that we should have had more success by awaiting Rommel's attack: a choice of place and time, and speed of movement, give an advantage to the modern armoured force that takes the initiative. How long will this war last if that advantage is always to be our enemy's?

General Fuller has no difficulty about the question of the offensive. He is willing to attack anything that exists and quite a number of things that do not exist—such as the "nomadic mind" of the Russian nation, which he claims explains their strategy. He was willing in 1940, after the fall of France, for us to attack the Soviet Union in order to cut off the supply of oil to the German army! And he is so little influenced by the desire to defend anything, including his own reputation as a serious writer, that he reprints extracts to that effect from an article titled "Attack! Attack! But Where?" which, as he remarks, "no editor would look at." His explanation for this is happy: he was "pretty well certain" that the best way to break "the alliance between Germany and Russia" was to march on the Caucasian oilfields.

Yet General Fuller can put more imagination and more clear vision into a sentence or two than most people can into a chapter. He saw, for example, in the February of this year, an essential point about German tactics which our forces learned by loss and disaster in Libya in June: that the Germans send forward with their tanks "protective anti-tank units, whose duty is not merely to beat off enemy tank attacks, but to attack in order to clear the way . . . In contrast to the French and British ideas on anti-tank work, the German are far more offensive in intent." If we had known that when fighting near Tobruk, the fortress might still be ours. And Fuller quotes official German accounts of the fighting in Spain to show how the Germans developed their use of *Flak* (anti-aircraft guns) against ground targets, until at the end of that war these guns were fired against air targets only once for each dozen times they were fired against tanks, guns or troops. Which was, of course, the "surprise" that defeated us in Libya years later.

"Soldiers and monks find comfort in dogmas and rituals," writes General Fuller in a collection of seventy aphorisms that are the best part of his book. "They blunt their minds by repeating platitudes and squander their time in writing manuals to justify their ignorance and relieve their fraternity from the terrors of thinking." He gives us, in his account of the development, theory and practice of mechanised war, plenty of the terrors of thinking. The pity is that these are buried among pages that in total effect are almost comic, because so little considered.

Modern Battle is an American account, mainly from German sources, of incidents in the earlier campaigns of this war. It is vivid, and each incident is described in such a way as to make practical conclusions very clear. It has more "new news" for the British reader than either of the books reviewed before it.

– Tom Wintringham

HARTLEY COLERIDGE

New Poems of Hartley Coleridge. Edited by Earl Leslie Griggs. *Oxford University Press.* 10s. 6d.

It is more than a dozen years since Professor Griggs gave us his admirable *Life of Hartley Coleridge*, marked by very wide research and showing much critical ability. He followed it up with an edition of Hartley's *Letters*, and now he still further increases our debt by giving us this volume, which includes not only a selection of poems already published, but several which, though printed, were almost inaccessible, and others which had never been printed at all. Any relic of this fascinating "eternal child" is welcome; and these verses, whatever their technical merits, are all characteristic and therefore, in their special fashion, charming.

They are in fact Hartley himself, and himself as he was at particular moments. As the dalesmen told Canon Rawnsley, "Hartley 'ud goa running along beside o' the banks and mak' his potry, and goa in the first oppen door and write what he'd got upo' paper"; and they recognised the difference between his work and Wordsworth's, which "was real hard stuff and bided a deal of makking." Thus, when Hartley saw a child, or was affected by the death of a friend, or would write "to Dr. Briggs on his seventieth birthday," the first lines, expressing the inspiring thought, were often keen and striking, but the conclusion either faded away or was not written at all: still more rarely was it revised. Even in his sonnets, the rigour of whose rules, in Dr. Griggs's opinion, constrained him to something like finish, there is constantly some inexactness. His poetry was like his life, unregulated, though full of flashes of beauty; and this was why his brother Derwent, in looking through his remains, found so much to reject.

But there is one thing we are sure to find in such a writer. Putting down what he feels just when he feels it—not waiting till the emotion shall be remembered, or forgotten, in tranquillity, he is always *sincere*; whether serious, humorous, or gloomy, his verses tell us what he is at the moment. And, as he could not help continually writing, he has left behind a very full record of his feelings as they changed. Knowing, as he did, that he was not a genius, conscious that his name was writ in water, and realising that, if he was not quite despised, it was because he bore his father's name, he never poses or pretends; and this unaffected modesty is the more remarkable as he had been a genius, and the fact had been only too openly proclaimed.

Small as this collection is, all moods are represented in it. It is a kind of versified diary. If he felt remorse for his mis-spent days, he put his remorse down in rhyme; if he felt a Christian trust in Divine forgiveness, he *entered* that also. Here is affection for friends, grief for their loss, the record of his surprise when he notes that a playmate of earlier days is now a grown woman. There is reverence for the distinguished men around him, along with a keen eye for their weaknesses. Thus, when Southey received the laurel, Hartley wrote a doggerel poem which plainly shows that, with all his love for the man, and despite an exaggerated admiration of his poetic gift, he knew his uncle's besetting tendency to belaud the powers that be. Though, as Professor Griggs has shown, his own serious poetry is fashioned on Wordsworth's, yet he could parody Peter Bell in verses which he himself never wrote down, and which Derwent, knowing Wordsworth's lack of humour, refused to publish. He could even parody "She dwelt among the untrodden ways."

There is plenty of light humour—the sort that one lets fall in easy talk—such, in fact, as would hardly be worth publication if it did not reveal a side of the author's character which we might miss amid the more sober verses which reflect his sad life. It is extempore; but almost all his poetry is extempore. A dissolution of Parliament produces a quatrain reminding us of Byron:

> Shout, Britain, raise a joyful shout,
> The Tyrant Tories all are out—
> Deluded Britons, cease your din,
> For lo—the scoundrel Whigs are in;

and Butter's Spelling Books inspire the thought that children

> Would rather dabble in the gutter
> Than learn to spell of Mr. Butter;
> Yes, their perverseness is so utter
> They'd rather eat than study butter.

Then, as he could not help writing, he would "goa in the first oppen door and write what he'd got upo' paper." He probably thought no eye but his own would ever see it; he did not reckon on Professor Griggs, to whom once again we return our sincerest thanks.

E. E. Kellett

HITLER'S DENMARK

Denmark, "Hitler's Model Protectorate." By Sten Gudme. *Gollancz.* 8s. 6d

Sten Gudme was news editor of the Danish paper *Politiken* when Denmark was invaded. For over a year he lived under Nazi rule before he succeeded in escaping to this country, bringing with him valuable inside information. At the beginning of his book he describes the hectic days before and after the invasion which was launched a few hours after the German Minister, von Rente-Fink, had given a "solemn assurance" on behalf of his Government on April 8, 1940, that no military action against Denmark was planned. A few hours later, however, on April 9, at 4.30 a.m., he appeared at the house of the Foreign Minister with an ultimatum, which he read at top speed at the same time when German soldiers were already crossing the border and floating Trojan Horses, troopships camouflaged as harmless "merchant vessels," sailed into Copenhagen harbour. While Court and Government gathered, the first shots of landing troops were fired near the King's Palace and one Minister on his way to the conference was arrested by the Nazis, making a *fait accompli* before the Nazi message could be considered.

Gudme gives an interesting account of Nazi methods and pre-invasion infiltration tactics. He describes the reaction of the Danes who awoke to find Nazi soldiers marching through the streets and Nazi planes scattering leaflets which informed the population that the Nazis had come to protect them from British invasion. Two typical incidents are the bricklayer who saw a Nazi soldier on guard, went straight for him and knocked him down, and the arrival of General Kaupisch in civilian clothes one day before the invasion and who emerged in uniform on April 9 as "Commander of the occupation army."

One part of the book deals with the destruction which Hitler's New Order has brought upon a small model State and its model economical and agricultural structure, converting it into a New Order Dying Space within the German "Lebensraum": its currency is undermined by so-called "trade-pacts" and its first quality goods deported to Germany and paid for in ersatz and the population is suffering from the effects of malnutrition.

Denmark had disarmed in 1934 (but the Nazis had seen to it that a Danish Nazi party was founded in 1929, with well-paid Quislings). Its army was a frontier guard, mobile mostly by

Fabian Autumn Lectures
(Series 1942)
"Towards the New Britain"

October 24. G. D. H. Cole on PLAN FOR LIVING (Chairman: A. Creech Jones, M.P.)
October 31. Aneurin Bevan, M.P., on PLAN FOR WAR (Chairman: John Parker, M.P.)
November 7. Jim Griffiths, M.P., on PLAN FOR THE KEY INDUSTRIES (Chairman: Lord Winster)
November 14. A. G. Street on PLAN FOR THE LAND (Chairman: Lord Addison)
November 21. Sir William Beveridge on PLAN FOR SOCIAL SECURITY (Chairman: Dr. W. A. Robson)
November 28. Harold J. Laski on CHOOSING THE PLANNERS (Chairman: Margaret Cole)

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bicycles. Resistance would have meant the devastation of the country within a few hours and the slaughtering of its helpless population by an overwhelmingly strong army superior in number and arms. In retrospect it was perhaps a wiser choice to subject the people to temporary hardship and to keep the nation intact, as a thorn in the Nazis' flesh, instead of surrendering it to the horrors of totalitarian destruction—in spite of the will of officers and men to fight (some of them fell in a gallant but vain attempt to stem the enemy which their grandfathers had fought in the Germano-Danish war). This intact nation's stubborn will to hamper the Nazis is much resented by the invader, and Gudme gives an interesting account of the various methods by which single individuals and groups resist, regardless of the risk of deportation to a German concentration camp and heavy fines. The whole book is a record of the result of the ruthless application of New Order methods which are inflicted upon every subjugated country. It should be read by all those who are still inclined to believe that the Nazis are, after all, not such a bad lot—and by all those who can appreciate a well written page of contemporary history.

ELISABETH CASTONIER

ANTHOLOGISING JOYCE

Introducing James Joyce. A selection of Joyce's prose made by T S. ELIOT. *Faber. 3s. 6d.*

"These fragments," wrote Mr. Eliot towards the close of *The Waste Land*, "I have shored against my ruins"; and the line is sandwiched between lines by Nerval and Kyd. A little farther off are Dante and Ovid, preceded by a twist of nursery rhyme; Miss Weston and the Upanishads seem to complete the ascriptions of this particular passage, though with Mr. Eliot one can never be quite sure. Some new chip or treasure may always be uncovered by the reader picking here and there in the salvage heap. Tin-cans, rubies, orange-peel: when has the collector's mania shown itself so insistently in literature? *The Road to Xanadu* revealed a Coleridge with similar habits of storing one's fancy, but Coleridge's mind worked instinctively and he rummaged outside literature, whereas Mr. Eliot consciously, fastidiously selects. *This* must go in, next to that and that: and *this* may be a famous line of Verlaine or Mrs. Porter washing her feet in soda-water. *The Waste Land* may not be the best of Mr. Eliot's poetry, but it is certainly the most revealing. Its anthologising is individual and expressive to a degree.

The same exact, personal choice would be found if a collection were made of passages quoted in Mr. Eliot's critical essays. Unexpectedly he will lay his finger on Blake's "London" or Kipling's "Danny Deever," and however well one may know these poems they will be tinged in future with Eliot, as speeches in Shakespeare may acquire a particular actor's voice. That is only to say that Mr. Eliot has the sort of authority for us that Arnold, Dryden or Johnson exercised in other days. He points; we follow.

He points. But how enigmatic such a gesture can become, when the finger is Mr. Eliot's! Mona Lisa couldn't be more mysterious. We were pointed once in the direction of St. Jean Perse's *Anabase*; a none too easy work made more baffling by the reticence and pomp of Mr. Eliot's Introduction. Kipling, more recently, was generously disbursed; though even then, I thought, Mr. Eliot kept a number of important cards up the sleeve. The instinct that once made him reveal a few sources of *The Waste Land* while concealing others obviously goes deep: he rarely sets out to explain anything without first wrapping that thing in masonic secrecies. Meaning to give away he holds back.

Introducing James Joyce is designed, presumably, to introduce. But does it? Ten passages from Joyce's writings, beginning with a story from *Dubliners* and ending with the last pages of *Finnegan's Wake*, are printed in chronological order, so as to hold an autobiographical thread and to mark the transformations of Joyce's matter and style. Brilliantly chosen; no one but Mr. Eliot could have gathered the material so economically. The introductory note tells us little except that the task of selection has been difficult, but the passages that follow, a *multum-in-parvo* of Joyce, both suggest a critical pattern and enable one to keep track of a writer whose thickets increased with the years. Mr. Eliot's arrangement of passages does bridge the gap between early naturalism and later Jabberwocky, does disclose growth where hitherto one had seen chiefly obsession. I should have thought, for example, that there was a break in Joyce's prose with the disappearance of the Daedalus figure, the "artist as a young man." But Mr. Eliot's passages smooth the arrival and departure of this modern Hamlet. First, in "The Sisters" and the superb Christmas scene of *Portrait of the Artist*, there is the talk from which all Joyce's writing springs, the talk and the child listening; then Daedalus grown up, with his defences of "silence, exile and cunning," spouting Aquinas and Aristotle over the heads of fellow-students; then, in *Ulysses*, talk of all kinds and the ticker-tape of consciousness (Daedalus myth-making in asides, Bloom registering the *idées reçues* of the universe) and the author rigmaroling about Dublin sights and characters, creating out of journalese, poetry and Church Latin, styles for everything; finally the rigmarole itself of *Finnegans Wake*, a language that for Joyce (though for few others) embraced all literature, myth and culture. I don't pretend that this is a very clear or easy progression, but Mr. Eliot has made it clearer. And to take a point hardly less important, Joyce's poetry that slides and swells everywhere under leathery waves of diction, can be felt more closely here in its various forms: the puritan glitter of the *Portrait*, the fag-ends of blank-verse and flowerings of lust in *Ulysses*, the raucous jingles interspersed with elegy that float off the dream-mutter of *Finnegans Wake*. Joyce returns, though speaking another language, to the voices of his childhood; it is the human voice that saved him, with blindness coming on, from turning into a clown, a pedant, a maniac. All his prose, from *Ulysses* on, is a release of the thwarted poetry of youth. His abilities as a verse-writer are strangely academic.

But only the reader who has already been introduced to James Joyce will be able to pick out the threads from Mr. Eliot's anthology. If the book is indeed aimed, as the publishers insist, at introducing readers, then a certain degree of explanation should have been admitted. The funeral scene from *Ulysses* may fairly stand by itself, but its place in the book, a hint as to the identities (Bloom hugging his cake of soap, Mr. Daedalus catching sight of his son from the cab window), a few general words about the author's intention, would obviously be helpful. And when it comes to *Finnegans Wake* some such guidance is essential. Mr. Eliot gives none. He refers us abruptly to Herbert Gorman's *Life* (a poor book) and *An Exagmination round his Factification for Incamination in Work in Progress* (how many copies of this ten-year-old symposium, published in Paris, still exist?) The new reader who gets as far as studying the *Exagmination* will be one of a select few. Why, though, make an already difficult author more difficult? Why not unbend a little? That is Mr. Eliot's secret. He has produced a book that will help those who know Joyce already, but to anyone else will appear formidably deterrent.

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nishing Island. By Elizabeth Kyle. *Peter Davies.* 7s. 6d.

Here is a rare find, a first-rate adventure book for ildren aged 7-14. It is not a work of genius, but if e forgets *Treasure Island* and compares it with the chine-made, glue-stuck mass in the booksellers' elves, it stands out. The tale is exciting, romantic, and t within the limits of the possible. The characters convincing, the children especially, with nature them, courage and fright, laughter and ill-temper. ey are likeable as the sawdust angels of most dern stories can never be. Above all, the author nveys that sense of vividness, of the extreme importce of feelings and events, which is the essence of ildhood. A Scot will be puzzled by the setting, a stern island where the people are half Highland d half Lowland; and it is fair to warn Southron ders that much of the talk is in dialect: enjoyable children and nothing like so obstruse as film erican. The pictures are poor, alas! This notice written for adults only, and particularly for aunts, a ss which should rush to buy up all copies and quire merit for Christmas.

Week-end Competitions

No. 663

t by V. S. Pritchett

The usual prizes are offered for a dedication for a ok by Chesterfield to Dr. Johnson, Pope to rvey, Blake to Sir Joshua Reynolds, Whistler to lde, Moore to Hardy, Lawrence to Joynson Hicks, Joyce to Edmund Gosse. Competitors should ect one of these pairs of enemies and the dications should not exceed 150 words.

LES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and uld be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great rnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor first post on Monday, October 26th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves right to print in part or as a whole any matter t in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. nnot be returned. When no entries reach the quired standard no prize will be awarded.

ESULT OF COMPETITION No. 660

t by Raymond Mortimer

The usual prizes are offered to competitors who, serving the feeling rather than the exact wording of the original, produce the best translations into English verse of the following prose poem:

L'ETRANGER.

Qui aimes-tu le mieux, homme énigmatique, dis?
Ton père, ta mère, ta soeur ou ton frère?
Je n'ai ni père, ni mère, ni soeur, ni frère.
Tes amis?
Vous vous servez d'une parole dont le sens m'est resté jusqu'à ce jour inconnu.
La beauté?
J'ignore sous quelle latitude elle est située.
L'or?
Je le hais comme vous haïssez Dieu.
Eh! qu'aimes-tu donc, extraordinaire étranger?
J'aime les nuages . . . les nuages qui passent . . . là-bas . . . les merveilleux nuages!

Report by Raymond Mortimer

By carelessness in typing I mauled the beauty of this marvellous poem by Baudelaire. The omission did not make nonsense—unluckily, for if it had, the mistake would have been noticed. The lines after " . . . ce jour inconnu " should run:

Ta patrie?
J'ignore sous quelle latitude elle est située.
La beauté?
Je l'aimerais volontiers, déesse et immortelle.

Then, it goes on, as printed, "L'or . . ." I offer my humblest apologies to contributors. Despite the difficulty of the problem, the entries were very numerous. One was in German. Two competitors sent limericks, the better by A. B. A.:

There was a young man from abroad,
Who with parents and brethren was bored:
  Friends, beauty and gold,
  All left him quite cold,
But the beautiful clouds he adored.

The dialogue form of the poem lent itself to the style of Herbert, the sentiments to that of Wordsworth, and Rowland D. Lloyd did well in a Wordsworth vein. Victor Eoves had a good shot in the Housman style, and I admired Cpl. Evans's sapphics. Other entries that showed conspicuous merit were by Fouché, G. D. Hobson, M. Squires, Jan Britton, L. E. J., Simon Bottle, D. W. Barker, Sir Robert Witt, W. Sterne, William Bliss, A. M. Oliver, T. H. Lyle, Allan M. Laing, A. Holt, A. Leggatt and H. M. Tomalin. Nancy Gunter and Postscript were among the best five; and I recommend that the prizes be divided between Little Billie, F.C.C., and G. de Vavasour.

THE STRANGER.

  Speak! Standing there inscrutable, apart;
Thou lovest—whom?—in thy most secret heart?
  Thy father, mother?
        To me unknown, unknown.
Sister or brother?
        I have lived alone, alone.
Thy friend?
        I know not what the word may mean.
Beauty?
        Where Beauty dwells, I have not been.
Gold?
        As thou hatest God, so I hate gold.
Stranger, what other love can thy heart hold?
I love—the clouds—the clouds in yonder sky—
The miracle that is—and passes by.

"LITTLE BILLEE"

Whom do you love most dearly in the end,
My baffling stranger, say:
Your father most? your mother, sister, brother?
—I have no brother or sister, father or mother.
—Ah, your friend?
—The meaning of that word, to my regret,
I have not fathomed yet.
—Why, beauty then?
—Up to to-day
I never have been told
Where beauty may be met.
—Then what of gold?
—I hate it, even as you hate God on high.
—What *do* you love, alas,
Most strange of men?
—I love the clouds, I love the clouds that pass,
The amazing clouds in the sky.

F. C. C.

"Enigmatic man,
For kin or kind
Love do you find?"
"*Love I never can.*"

"Friended or alone?"
"*Friend is a word*
I have heard
But have never known."

"Beauty do you seek?"
"*Not so:*
I should not know
Which road to take."

"Gold?" "*It is a clod.*
Gold I abhor;
Nor worship more
Than you do God."

"Man outside the crowds,
What is it you love?"
"*Look above! See above,*
My loves, the clouds!"

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